PRIVATE AND PUBLIC REALITIES:
A STUDY OF THE SUBJECTIVE NOVEL
IN NEW ZEALAND

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CONTENTS

PREFACE

I would like to thank the following people for their help while I was writing this thesis:

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ABSTRACT

The assumption lying behind most criticism of fiction written in New Zealand has been that the realistic novel and short story most adequately convey the experience of living in this country. This thesis questions that assumption in respect of the novel. The argument presented here is that the realistic novel adequately conveys only the experience of young European men who are physically and mentally healthy and renders as insignificant any other perceptions of life in New Zealand.

Writers wishing to convey a vision of the world which is unacceptable in the world of the realistic novel have turned to another fictional form, that of the subjective novel. In this mode of fiction the authors' concern is with their characters' inner world - the world of the imagination and the emotions - rather than with the physical, outer world which is the domain of the realistic novelist.

Three groups of writers in New Zealand have used the form of the subjective novel. They have used it consciously as a vehicle for expressing those visions of the world that are excluded from the realistic novel. These three groups are women writers, Maori writers, and a group of men authors. The main part of this thesis is devoted to an examination of their novels - to the ways in which they define their characters' exclusion from what is considered significant and acceptable in the realistic novel, and to a discussion of perceptions of the world which their characters have.

In the section on women writers I consider two novels of Robin Hyde - The Godwits Fly and Wednesday's Children - the novels of Janet Frame, Sylvia Ashton-Warner, Joy Cowley, Margaret Sutherland, Jean Watson, and Marilyn Duckworth's first novel A Gap in the Spectrum. Three novels by Maori authors are discussed in Part II of the section on the subjective novel - Witi Ihimaera's two novels Tangi and Whanau and Patricia Grace's novel Mutuwhenua. In the final part of this section I have grouped together eight novels by male writers: Frank Sargeson's I Saw in My Dream and Michael Henderson's The Log of a Superfluous Son, Graham Billing's The Slipway and Ian Wedde's Dick Seddon's Great Dive, and the four novels of Ronald Hugh Morrieson.

The conclusion of this thesis is that the subjective novel offers us one more way of "seeing" and that to ignore the forces of the imagination is to ignore part of the experience of life in New Zealand.

INTRODUCTION

> Because her country had had so little direct experience of the hunger and fear that were the daily life of millions of people in the world, it had to increase, train, its imaginative force; even in its lack it had the power to produce an overwhelming force of imaginative experts, trained to see the invisible, the intangible, the real. [1]

This thesis is an examination of those novels which have been written in New Zealand by Malfred Signal's "force of imaginative experts", those writers who have been trained to see and write about the world of feeling and imagination. The term I have used to describe these novels is "subjective", the term used by Leon Edel in his critical work The Modern Psychological Novel, in which he examines a similar fictional development in English and European writing which began prior to World War 1.[2]

DEFINITIONS

The subjective novel distinguishes itself from other modes of fiction in certain verifiable ways. The subjective novelist is interested in the world of feeling and imagination. Writing of the work of Marcel Proust, Dorothy Richardson and James Joyce, Edel describes them as turning "away from external to internal reality, from the outer world that Balzac had charted a century before to the hidden world of fantasy and reverie into which there play constantly the

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[1] Janet Frame, A State of Siege (Pegasus, Christchurch, 1967), page 72.

[2] Leon Edel, The Modern Psychological Novel (1964; rpt. Peter Smith, Gloucester, Mass., 1972), page v.

life and perception of our senses". All subjective novelists, writes Edel, seem to write from "an acute need to cope with inner problems and project their inner life before the world".[3] In New Zealand the language used to describe the subjective novel has been similar. Witi Ihimaera describes himself as writing about "the landscapes of the heart";[4] Patrick Evans, reviewing a novel by Joy Cowley, describes Cowley, Janet Frame and Sylvia Ashton-Warner as "making voyages into the interior".[5]

The concern with the inner self, with the consciousness of the characters in the novels, leads to a radical change in certain formal and thematic aspects. The point of view of the novel is no longer that of the omniscient narrator. Instead the reader of the subjective novel has what Edel has described as "the creation of the illusion that the reader actually follows the character's flowing thoughts".[6]

This illusion of following the character's thoughts influences the use made of time by the subjective novelist. For him or her "Life is not a series of gig-lamps systematically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end."[7] From this attitude comes an approach to time which is best expressed by the following lines from T.S. Eliot's Four Quartets: "Time past and time future/What might have been and what has been/Point to one end, which is always

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[3]Ibid., page 12.
[4]Witi Ihimaera, "The Maori in Literature" in Michael King, ed., Tihe Mauri Ora (Methuen, New Zealand, 1978), page 84.
[5]Patrick Evans, "Review of Joy Cowley's Nest in a Falling Tree", Landfall, Vol.22, No.4, December 1968, page 422.
[6]Edel, op.cit., page 50.
[7]Virginia Woolf, "Modern Fiction" in Collected Essays, Vol.ii, 1966; rpt. in David Lodge, ed., Twentieth Century Literary Criticism (Longman, London, 1972), page 88.

present."[8] The ever-present moment held in the consciousness of the novel's characters is what interests the subjective novelist. The mechanical time-span is usually short, providing a structure within which the character is emotionally and imaginatively free to wander in "Time past and time future". Similarly the physical space covered in a subjective novel is small. The emotional and imaginative space is much larger so that the physical space is also a structural device containing the inner world of the character of the novel.

The treatment of certain themes distinguishes the subjective novel from other modes of fiction. The themes I examine in this thesis as indicative of the subjective novel are those of death, art and insanity. Because the subjective novelist is concerned with his or her characters' inner life, death, which marks the end of physical life, is not the fearful and mysterious event that it is in other types of novels. The subjective novelist is interested in the artistic process rather than in the artistic product, because what is real for him or her is not what is tangible and visible as an artistic product is, but what is intangible and invisible, the inner life that produces the artistic creation. It is the individual consciousness that is the focus of the subjective novel, and for this reason questions of what is normal and what is abnormal do not concern the subjective novelist, except insofar as his or her characters' behaviour or thought patterns might be considered abnormal by others. Insanity is of concern to the subjective novelist because many of them are aware that the experiences they relate in their novels may be considered

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[8] T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets, "Burnt Norton" I. Quoted in Edel, op.cit., page 97.

insane. Most subjective novelists ask that their readers' definitions of what they consider sane and insane be widened to include many various experiences.

Part of the definition of the subjective novel in New Zealand lies in the extent to which it differs from the realistic novel. The realistic novel has been accepted and recognised as the dominant novel form in New Zealand, and sometimes is claimed as being the only true way of interpreting the New Zealand experience. Because of the predominance of this fictional form, I use Section I of the thesis to examine certain aspects which distinguish the subjective novel from the realistic novel.

The realistic novel as it has developed in New Zealand is an off-shoot of the English realistic novel of the nineteenth century. The cultural pattern in New Zealand follows a similar structure to the social pattern; of the latter Robert Chapman has written: "The visual analogy is of a Y, one of the arms of which is our pattern, the trunk reaching up in time to early and mid-Victorian England."[9]

The realistic novel which was part of the literary heritage of the early settlers of New Zealand was particularly well suited to describing life in a new land. In her book The New Zealand Novel Joan Stevens outlines four stages that the novel has passed through in its development in New Zealand. The first three of these - recording, exploiting and preaching[10] - are dealt with most adequately by the form of the realistic novel with which the early New Zealand novelists were familiar.

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[9]Robert Chapman, "Fiction and the Social Pattern", 1953; rpt. Wystan Curnow, ed., Essays on New Zealand Literature (Heinemann, Auckland, 1973), page 78.

[10]Joan Stevens, The New Zealand Novel, 1860-1965 (A.H. & A.W. Reed, Wellington, 1966), page 10.

In a land in which a better future for all was always a possibility the belief of the realistic novel in progress was particularly appropriate. In New Zealand this belief in progress took on a much narrower meaning than it had had in England. Progress in New Zealand was towards a better physical life; in the novels the life of the spirit and intellect was largely ignored except insofar as it could contribute to a richer physical life.

Like its English counterpart, the New Zealand realistic novel is what David Daiches calls "'a public instrument', basing its view of what was significant in human affairs on a generally agreed standard. Its plot patterns were constructed out of incidents and situations which were seen to matter in human affairs equally by writer and reader".[11] What is considered significant and important in human affairs in New Zealand life and thus in the realistic novel is the contribution people make to a better physical existence. In part this is explained by the pioneering origins of the society. The land had to be conquered and exploited, and this was work that was largely done by men. Women did domestic work, and thus were seen to make no significant contribution to the society in which they lived. Maoris had a different approach to the land, and because they did not want to exploit it in the same way as the Europeans did, they were seen as alien and consequently unimportant. Like women, they made no contribution that could be considered significant. Any man who did not conform to society's expectations of him could expect to have his experiences of the world considered insignificant and unacceptable. Those who could make a worthwhile contribu-

[11] David Daiches, The Novel and the Modern World (Phoenix Books, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1970), page 1.

tion were men who were European, young and healthy. The realistic novel, being a form which shares with the society about which and for which it is written assumptions about what is important and acceptable in human behaviour, considers only the experiences of young European men who are mentally and physically healthy to be important. When a realistic novelist writes of Maoris, women, children, old people, and those who are mentally or physically ill, he or she renders their experiences as being either unacceptable or insignificant or both.

One of the important facts about the subjective novel in New Zealand is that it has been used by those whose experiences have not been considered important either in the society in which they live or in the novel form which dominates the fiction of that society. Thus it is used to interpret the experiences of women, Maoris, and men who do not contribute in any way that could be considered significant by a society which values hard physical work above all else. The seeming insignificance of their experiences casts them outside the society in which they live. A large part of this thesis is devoted to an examination of the subjective novel as a form used by those who see themselves and are seen as outsiders in the society in which they live.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SUBJECTIVE NOVEL

Because the realistic novel is based so securely in the society from which and for which it is written, whenever the physical and moral foundations of that society are either shattered or shaken, the world of the realistic novel is likewise threatened. The Depression of the 1930s caused

writers in New Zealand to examine different fictional forms for interpreting the New Zealand experience, because the assumptions that lay behind the novel form used thus far seemed no longer valid. It became difficult to believe in progress when events outside New Zealand could so easily halt the movement towards a better and wealthier future. Writer and reader could no longer share standards of what was significant because all that had once been important had disappeared. E.H. McCormick writes of the effect of the Depression:

> The 'Great Depression' disorganised New Zealand's economy and the social edifice based on that economy; it led to political changes more radical than those of the nineties; it effected a reorientation in outlook of major importance to New Zealand's literature ... [12]

J.C. Reid writes of this new development that "the whole temper of the novel changed under the impact of the Depression".[13]

It was of course the external world that was shattered by the Depression, and it is the external world that is the focus of the realistic novel. John A. Lee used the realistic novel form to fictionalise the effects of a society's collapse on one family, the Porcellos, laying the blame with those who administered the country's affairs. Lee's use of the novel for such a purpose was not new, though never had a novelist expressed such a savage indictment of the political and social system in New Zealand as he does in Children of the Poor and The Hunted.[14]

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[12] E.H. McCormick, Letters and Art in New Zealand (Department of Internal Affairs, Wellington, 1940), page 169.

[13] J.C. Reid, "New Zealand Literature" in The Literatures of Australia and New Zealand by G.A. Wilkes and J.C. Reid (The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1970), page 193.

[14] John A. Lee, Children of the Poor (T. Werner Laurie Ltd., London, 1934); The Hunted (T. Werner Laurie Ltd., London, 1936).

The other direction that the novel took under the impact of the Depression is exemplified by Robin Hyde's writing, particularly in her novels Wednesday's Children and The Godwits Fly. In these novels Hyde is concerned with an inner reality, a world of emotion and imagination which is impervious to such threats of the external world as the Depression. Her two novels are the first examples of a fiction in which the interest is in the inner world.

In the opening chapter of The Godwits Fly Hyde distinguishes between inner and outer reality in her use of the symbol of the Glory Hole. The novel's protagonist, Eliza Hannay, looks at what is in external terms a hole in the floor of a neighbour's washhouse. To Mrs Malley who owns both the washhouse and the hole, the hole is no more than a hole, an imperfection in her floor, and she describes it as "nasty, dirty". To Eliza and to Bob Malley, Mrs Malley's son, the hole is a "glory hole". Bob returns from it with

> his eyes full of mysterious light ...
>
> He put into her [Eliza's] hands a lavender china shoe, filled with wet new violets. Their scent made a pale streak in the washhouse.
>
> 'The Fairy Queen sent you some violets in one of her shoes, and she hopes you'll come yourself next time.'
>
> Mrs Malley's face brimmed with half-laughing, half-compassionate mischief ...
>
> Mrs Malley could smile; but one night, perhaps when the moon floated like a white terrifying balloon over the fences, Eliza was coming back to the Glory Hole; she wanted to see the Fairy Queen for herself; she wasn't afraid of dirty spiders in Fairy Land. [15]

It is Eliza's private interpretation of the reality of the hole in the washhouse floor that interests Hyde, not what the

[15] Robin Hyde, The Godwits Fly (1938; rpt. Auckland University Press/Oxford University Press, Auckland, 1974), page 7.

society - represented here by Mrs Malley - considers it to be. This sort of distinction differentiates Hyde's fiction from that of writers who preceded her.

The promise of a new mode of fiction which Hyde's work indicates was not realised for nearly twenty years. Between the publication of The Godwits Fly in 1939 and the arrival of Janet Frame's first novel, Owls Do Cry, in 1957, only Frank Sargeson's novel I Saw in My Dream examines a vision of the world which is different from that presented in the realistic novel. The decade of the 1940s saw the continuation of the realistic novel with the publication of such works as David Ballantyne's The Cunninghams in 1948, and war novels like Dan Davin's For the Rest of Our Lives (1947) and Guthrie Wilson's Brave Company (1950).

In the novels of James Courage[16] "something of the strange poetry of living and loving"[17] is suggested but Courage finally allies himself with a position where poetry, imagination and feeling have little place. In Fires in the Distance, for example, Katherine Donovan is tempted by the world of poetry which is offered to her by a young visitor, Paul, to her family's North Canterbury sheep station. Many years before the novel opens, Katherine's mother has retired from what Courage considers should be her responsibilities as a wife and as a mother. She now spends most of her life in bed, emerging only to play the piano. Her bedroom and her isolation in it are symbols of her alienation from the world around her. Her artistic activity - piano playing - cuts her off still further from a world which values livestock

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[16] The novels which fit the pattern discussed here are the following by James Courage: The Fifth Child (Constable, London, 1948); Desire Without Content (Constable, London, 1950); Fires in the Distance (Constable, London, 1952); The Young Have Secrets (Jonathon Cape, London, 1954); The Call Home (Jonathon Cape, London, 1956).

[17] Reid, op.cit., page 200.

above humanity. Courage is adamant that Katherine should not involve herself in circumstances which might lead her to be alienated from the world in the way her mother is. For this reason, Katherine rejects Paul and the world of the imagination which he represents for her. She marries a neighbouring farmer who never reads poetry, and of whom she can only say: "'We get on very well ... I'm fond of him.'"[18] Events in the family persuade Mrs Donovan to leave her room, and return to her husband, a man who says of himself that he has lost the fashion of loving.[19] Reality, represented by these two men of the soil, wins over the world of the imagination. The same pattern is followed in Courage's other novels.

E.H. McCormick has observed that the late 1950s saw a burst of fictional activity. He notes the arrival of four new novelists: Janet Frame, Sylvia Ashton-Warner, Ian Cross and M.K. Joseph.[20] To these names should be added that of Marilyn Duckworth, whose first novel, A Gap in the Spectrum, was published in 1959. M.K. Joseph's novel I'll Soldier No More is similar to the war novels of Wilson and Davin mentioned earlier, in that it recounts the activities of war in a realistic and objective manner. Though Joseph was a new novelist, the fiction he wrote was not new.

Ian Cross's work is rather different from that of Joseph. His first and best-known novel, The God Boy, takes a familiar theme in New Zealand fiction - that of childhood. Cross's innovations lie both in his technique and in his treatment of his subject matter. It is difficult to fault

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[18]Courage, Fires in the Distance, op.cit., page 231.
[19]Ibid., page 154.
[20]E.H. McCormick, New Zealand Literature - A Survey (Oxford University Press, Wellington, 1959), page 161.

the narrative skill of The God Boy. The ability to tell a good story is not rare in New Zealand fiction, but Cross's narrative stands out as one of the best tales told in the whole of the literature. The technique is well-suited to the use of a child narrator. Cross convinces the reader by his use of language that here at last is an authentic account of childhood as lived by a child. In this novel the reader does come very close to the world of childhood as it is seen by a child, but the narrative is still controlled by an adult, omniscient narrator. Cross does not allow Jimmy Sullivan to direct the narrative as the child Daphne Withers is allowed to direct her part of the narrative of Janet Frame's novel Owls Do Cry, or as Eliza Hannay is allowed to control certain parts of Hyde's novel The Godwits Fly. The values and behaviour of the adult male world dominate The God Boy in a way that they do not in Hyde's or Frame's novels.

It is the novels by Janet Frame, Sylvia Ashton-Warner and Marilyn Duckworth which continue what Robin Hyde had begun with The Godwits Fly and Wednesday's Children. These three novelists are concerned with what Anna Vorontosov in Spinster calls "the world behind my eyes";[21] what Diana Clouston in A Gap in the Spectrum calls "a complete new world inside my mind";[22] and what Malfred Signal in A State of Siege, a later novel by Janet Frame, calls the "room two inches behind the eyes".[23]

The almost simultaneous appearance of Owls Do Cry, Spinster and A Gap in the Spectrum confirmed the promise of Robin Hyde's novels that there is an alternative mode of

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[21] Sylvia Ashton-Warner, Spinster (1958; rpt. Penguin Books, Middlesex, 1961), page 98.
[22] Marilyn Duckworth, A Gap in the Spectrum (Hutchinson, London, 1959), page 19.
[23] Frame, A State of Siege, op.cit., page 14.

fiction to the realistic novel possible in New Zealand. More recent novelists such as Joy Cowley, Margaret Sutherland and Jean Watson, Witi Ihimaera and Patricia Grace, and Ian Wedde and Michael Henderson have written fiction which indicates that their concern too is with an inner and private reality.

CONCLUSION

In Section I of this thesis I examine the realistic and the subjective novel together in order that each mode may be distinguished from the other. In Section II I examine the novels of three different groups whose experiences of the world have been rendered as insignificant and/or unacceptable in the realistic novel. These three groups are women, Maoris and men. My interest in the novels I examine in that section lies firstly in the novelist's portrayal of his or her character's alienation from the society in which they live and the reasons that the novelist advances for the character's isolation, and secondly in the vision of the world which the characters of the novels have.

That the world created by the subjective novelist is as viable as that created by the realistic novelist should be apparent to any reader of New Zealand fiction. My belief that the vision of the subjective novel is a richer, more diverse, and finally more real vision of the world will become obvious as the examination of the novels progresses.

SECTION I

THE WORLDS OF THE REALISTIC AND SUBJECTIVE NOVELS

The dominance of the realistic novel in New Zealand fiction means that part of the definition of the subjective novel lies in the ways in which it differs from the realistic novel. In this section of the thesis I examine some of these differences. Some are formal, such as the point of view, and the use made of time and of space; others are thematic, such as the treatment of death, art, and insanity. Because the formal aspects influence the treatment of themes, form is dealt with first. Overriding all the differences between the realistic and the subjective novel, however, is the basic distinction that the realistic novel concerns itself with external and public reality, and the subjective novel concerns itself with internal and private reality.

POINT OF VIEW

The reader of a realistic novel looks at the exterior of the characters in the novel, and the way the reader looks at that exterior is directed by a narrator who controls the novel. A realistic novelist does not show his or her characters in the process of thinking; he or she reports what it is that the character thinks or feels in a certain situation or about a certain point. The interest in the realistic novel is with the product of thought and feeling, rather than with the process of thought. The distinction between process and product becomes particularly obvious in

novels which concern themselves with the moral development of their characters. It is novels of this type which also make most apparent the limitations of the point of view used in realistic novels. Dan Davin's novel Not Here, Not Now and Jane Mander's novel The Story of a New Zealand River are especially good examples to examine in this respect.

Dan Davin's interest in Not Here, Not Now is in the progress of his hero, Martin Cody, towards a better physical and moral life. Davin takes Martin at a crucial stage in his development - as he is leaving adolescence for adulthood. Martin is leaving behind him his family, in particular his mother, his Catholic faith, and the school where he has been very successful. In their place he acquires more desirable goods - a girlfriend, a Rhodes scholarship, and a place in student politics at the University of Otago. The emphasis is on progress, as it is always in the realistic novel.

The dimension which Davin adds to his novel is a concern in Martin's moral life. Physical progress is easily charted without recourse to a character's inner life, but moral development is not so simply described. The moments of introspection allowed to Martin appear to be an intrusion in the novel, and because they do not marry well with the basic concern with physical progress they also seem false. Such an introspective moment occurs when Martin sits back to consider the effect his campaign for the Rhodes scholarship is having on his character:

> Was the Rhodes worth being placed in a position where it mattered what people said about you, worth this campaign which had forced him to peddle a false version of himself, withhold his real view of people and things ... Better to have been like Austin Hales and set your mind to something that allowed you to consort with mice rather than men, and learn some small pieces of permanent truth rather than advance yourself by your boot-

> straps in a way that degraded you and at best produced only an outward success, did nothing for anyone else, and taught you only to understand ordinary people. [1]

The use of second and third person pronouns indicates the extent to which this seeming introspection is in fact being manipulated by an external narrator looking in at Martin. The fact that Martin does not use "I" when thinking about the progress of his own soul suggests a distance from his moral development which renders it insignificant for the reader. Because this kind of introspection occurs relatively infrequently in the novel, when it does occur it seems both implausible and unimportant. If Davin were really concerned with Martin's moral development he would devote as much space to it as he does to Martin's physical progress.

Apart from these two criticisms of the way that Davin handles Martin's moral progress, there is the fact that Martin's self-analysis does not lead him towards a better life. Although he finds what he is embroiled in disgusting, he does nothing about it. He does not abandon the quest for the Rhodes scholarship, nor does he try to alter the system of selection so that future candidates do not have to involve themselves in such double-dealing. For this reason Martin appears more despicable than he would have had he only conformed to a bad system without any awareness of its faults and its effects on his character. His awareness coupled with his refusal to do anything about the situation means that his moral life regresses rather than progresses. The realistic novel with its concern with a character's external life and its belief in progress is particularly ill-equipped to deal with moral development of the kind that Davin toys

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[1] Dan Davin, Not Here, Not Now (Robert Hale & Company, London/ Whitcombe & Tombs Limited, New Zealand, 1970), page 268.

with in this novel.

Jane Mander does the same as Davin with her main character, Alice Roland, in The Story of a New Zealand River. Mander's concern with Alice's moral development is more apparent than Davin's concern is with Martin. Because of the position she occupies - mother and wife - Alice cannot hope to gain for herself many of the worldly goods which Martin can hope to accumulate. It is possible for Mander to concentrate more fully on her moral development, on her education out of puritanism into freedom. Despite this, the reader rarely sees Alice's development from Alice's point of view. Always it is seen from the point of view of an omniscient narrator looking down on Alice, commenting on what is happening to her. If it is not the narrator doing this, it is other characters in the novel who convey to the reader the extent of Alice's education, or lack thereof. The progress she makes in her first three weeks on the river is summed up by her mentor, David Bruce, thus: "'She is progressing that way. Three weeks ago I was a piece of machinery. Today I am at least a human being.'"[2] The word "progress" is indicative of what is seen to be happening to Alice. The fact that she can now accept someone in a lower social class than herself (David Bruce is her husband's foreman) means that some of her old ideas have been abandoned. Abandoning old ideas is progress in this novel, and the basis of Alice's education is that she should give up her notions of the world which she has held all her life, and acquire the new ones that are taught to her by David Bruce.

At certain significant stages in Alice's progress she

[2]Jane Mander, The Story of a New Zealand River (1920; rpt. Whitcombe & Tombs Limited, Christchurch, 1973), page 47.

is allowed to reflect on what is happening to herself. One such occasion occurs when Alice has decided that she must tell Tom Roland, her husband, that she will leave him for David Bruce. This action will signify the extent of her moral development; no longer does she feel a duty to Tom as she once did, and she has therefore progressed in the direction outlined for her by Mander. Along with this significant action goes a rare piece of introspection in which Alice wonders about her future:

> Alice lay awake most of that night wondering what on earth she was to make of the rest of her life. She could not understand why, now that she seemed to have disposed of almost all the things that could hurt her, she should remain restless and unsatisfied. She was at peace and would remain so, she knew, with her husband. She would keep her 'beautiful spiritual' friendship with David Bruce still unspotted from the world - and however much she might relapse in mad moments she knew that was the only way for her. She was resigned to Asia's plans; resigned to losing her; resigned to seeing her go her own ways, whatever those ways might turn out to be. But all this resignation left her stranded on a desert strewn with the dry bones of missed adventure, with no finger-post to point the way to the high places of a new experience. It seemed to her that her life stretched out before her a drab and colourless thing fading off into a vacuous old age, wherein she would continue to play her ornamental part, to dress up for dinner, to play the lady bountiful, to sit out so many evenings in the week with David Bruce, to play his accompaniments less and less ably every year, and to be to her girls some sort of pretty picture of nice old motherhood. [3]

Thought is only as orderly as this when it is seen from without; when seen from within, where thought is generated, it more closely resembles the sort of dislocated process that occurs in much of Janet Frame's work, in Witi Ihimaera's novel Tangi, and in some of Virginia Woolf's work, for example. Mander's account of Alice's thoughts fails to convey the sort of mental chaos Alice is in simply

[3] Ibid., page 286.

because Mander refuses to let Alice control the pattern of her thoughts. Once again the use of the third person pronoun indicates the distance between Alice and the self that she is contemplating.

In the end it is not the result of her thoughts that frees Alice from the complications she sees herself to be embroiled in. The fortuitous death of Tom Roland in a logging accident enables David Bruce and Alice to marry without the stigma of divorce or adultery. Again action is more significant than reflection, and moral development is indicated by physical activity rather than being an end in itself.

The defect of Not Here, Not Now and The Story of a New Zealand River is the failure to use a form suitable to the description of the characters' moral development. Such development needs to be portrayed from within the characters' own consciousness as it is in subjective novels. The point of view typical of realistic novels is not always so mismatched as it is in these two novels. In many realistic novels the point of view is much more appropriate to the content of the novel which is the external, physical lives of its characters. This is the case with John Mulgan's novel Man Alone. Mulgan never pretends that he is giving the reader access to the inner life of his protagonist, Johnson. Paul Day describes the book accurately when he writes: "Johnson is just a case history: his personality is uninteresting - because Mulgan doesn't want us to be distracted from the contemplation of the real subject of his book - the land and the people of New Zealand."[4] The fact

[4]Paul Day, "Man Alone" in Cherry Hankin, ed., Critical Essays on the New Zealand Novel (Heinemann, Auckland, 1976), page 63.

that Mulgan never gets "inside Johnson's head" is irrelevant; the novel shows no intention of being one that displays interest in the thoughts and feelings of its characters. This is a more honest novel than Davin's in particular in that Mulgan does not pretend to be doing something he is not. Both Davin and Mander give the impression that judgements and conclusions of a moral or ethical kind (such as Alice Roland and Martin Cody arrive at) are easily achieved, because the reader never sees directly the turmoil associated with making such judgements or arriving at such conclusions. In this respect also, they perpetrate a false picture of the workings of their character's mind, ignoring the complexities of their character's inner world for the seeming simplicities of their outer life. Furthermore, all realistic novelists, but particularly those like Davin and Mander, ignore the richness of the inner life of their characters, a richness which becomes obvious when one examines subjective novels.

In the subjective novel the reader is seeing the world through the eyes of the character of the novel because the subjective novel is a record of the consciousness of that character. Glimpses of the interior lives of characters in the realistic novel occur infrequently and only if the narrator of the novel considers such glimpses appropriate to the progress of the character's development. The reader of a realistic novel written in New Zealand has a full picture of the exterior of the characters in such a novel, but a very inadequate picture of the characters' inner life. The reader of a subjective novel, however, not only has a full picture of the inner world of the characters of that novel, but also has a quite full picture of the characters' outer world. In Janet Frame's novel A State of Siege, for example,

the reader knows about Malfred Signal's teaching,[5] about her relationships with other people,[6] about her painting as a physical activity as well as a creative one,[7] about her needs for cups of tea and for companionship.[8] How the reader knows these facts about Malfred's physical life is different from the way he knows similar things about the life of Netta Samuel in Noel Hilliard's Maori Girl, for example. In Hilliard's novel the reader is told things about Netta's life as they relate to her as a Maori. In Frame's novel the reader is told things about Malfred only as she (Malfred) knows or remembers them.

The subjective novelist collapses the orderly telling that is characteristic of the realistic novel. He or she knows that the workings of the mind are not governed by any externally imposed realities such as chronological time. All that controls the consciousness that is recorded in the subjective novel is the consciousness itself. In the second section of Part One of Owls Do Cry, for example, the reader learns about the Negro grandmother of the Withers' children, the song she sang is quoted, there is instruction to eat cabbage and avoid having a wooden leg like this grandmother, there is discussion of the difference between "colander" and "calendar", which leads to the use of calendars, and Mrs Withers' injunction to her children to drink the cabbage water mentioned three paragraphs earlier.[9] All that controls this passage, which occupies three-quarters of a page and covers six topics, is the mind of Daphne who is

[5]Janet Frame, A State of Siege (Pegasus, Christchurch, 1967). See, for example, pages 89 and 118.
[6]Ibid., Part Three "The Stone".
[7]Ibid., pages 61-62.
[8]Ibid., page 227.
[9]Janet Frame, Owls Do Cry (1957; rpt. Sun Books, Melbourne, 1967), page 10.

remembering this sequence. In contrast is the description of Netta Samuel's childhood in Maori Girl in which it takes Hilliard five pages[10] to describe the importance of Netta's Granny to her family. Netta's Granny is present for a purpose - to show the lack of her grandchildren's Maori heritage. The only purpose of the Withers' grandmother is that she exists in Daphne's mind. Despite the brevity of the description of the Withers' grandmother, the reader has a very clear idea of what she was like, and, more importantly, of her significance to her grandchildren. In Maori Girl, despite the length of the description, the grandmother never becomes more than the symbol of Maori life that Hilliard intended her to be. She is a more shadowy character than the Negro grandmother whom the Withers children seem never to have seen.

The turmoil of the inner world is inadequately conveyed by the realistic novel, as I have suggested in looking at Not Here, Not Now and The Story of a New Zealand River. How much more adequate the subjective novel is in portraying such a mental state is obvious from the following section of Robin Hyde's novel The Godwits Fly. Eliza Hannay has been accused of taking two rolls of crinkly paper, a trivial enough incident in itself but of tremendous significance to Eliza who is new in the school and who is afraid. When the accusation is made against Eliza in front of the class the following thoughts go through her mind:

> Why don't you ask Eliza Hannay? There is a spot of ink right in front of her blouse, and her hair sticks out behind. The bush smells purple and golden-brown. They have put high wire-netting over these classroom windows, so that you can't look out. I was dux of my school, but the girls

[10]Noel Hilliard, Maori Girl (1960; rpt. Heinemann, Auckland, 1971), pages 34-38.

> from Oddipore are all scattered, like the frail little pink and indigo blobs of jelly washed up at Island Bay after a big storm. What on earth would I do with two rolls of crinkly paper? [11]

There is nothing orderly about these thoughts, and the ink-spot, the shape of her hair, the smell of the bush, the wire-netting, and her being dux of her primary school seem to have nothing directly to do with the stolen rolls of paper. But the relevance of Eliza's thoughts to the progress of the novel is not important; what is important to Hyde here is the process of Eliza's thoughts.

The difference between Eliza's thoughts over a mild misdemeanour and those of another child over a much more important event illustrates once again the difference between the realistic and the subjective novel. In Ian Cross's The God Boy the novel's protagonist, Jimmy Sullivan, worries through school about the fight he imagines, correctly, he has provoked by telling his father that his mother had said his father did not earn enough to buy Jimmy a bike.[12] Jimmy's concern makes him decide to let his mind wander:

> In my mind I went for a flight in an aeroplane, and looked down on Raggleton from high up. I had a pilot, of course, a man in a leather jacket and goggles, and he swooped the plane down low over the beach, and everybody I knew was down there waving up at us. I had just got to the part where the pilot was turning to me and saying, 'You've got flying in your blood, I can see that; would you like to take over the controls?' when I felt a hard prod on my shoulders and, looking up, I saw Sister Angela standing over me. [13]

Jimmy has his thoughts totally under control in a way that no child imagining a fight between his parents would have. The wanderings of his mind are tightly confined, not by him as it seems, but by the external narrator who is always present

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[11] Robin Hyde, The Godwits Fly (1938; rpt. Auckland University Press/Oxford University Press, Auckland, 1974), page 93.
[12] Ian Cross, The God Boy (1957; rpt. Whitcombe & Tombs Ltd., Christchurch, 1972), pages 41-42.
[13] Ibid., page 41.

in this novel manipulating what it is that Jimmy thinks and feels. How little Jimmy's mind actually does wander becomes most apparent when one compares his thoughts with those of Eliza. There is no introduction to Eliza's thoughts. They flow just as thoughts flow in life, especially as they wander when one is under stress. The only way for thoughts to wander in a novel is to abandon the control exerted by an omniscient narrator, and to allow the mind of the character involved to dictate the direction which will be taken.

In the passages referred to here from Owls Do Cry and The Godwits Fly control of the narrative has been given to the characters of the novel. The reader is, so to speak, right inside the consciousness of Daphne Withers and Eliza Hannay. This is not always so in subjective novels written in New Zealand. Frequently the author is not sure enough of what he or she is doing to allow the characters of the novel to seemingly escape from his or her control completely. This is more true of earlier practitioners of the subjective novel than it is of later writers. The passage quoted from The Godwits Fly, for example, occurs in the only chapter in the whole novel in which Hyde allows the mind of Eliza Hannay to take over the control of the novel. In the other chapters of the novel the point of view is much more akin to that of the realistic novel. What Hyde does which distinguishes her from many realistic novelists is to have the events of the novel told from the point of view of different characters. While most of the novel belongs to Eliza, there are chapters in which the point of view is that of her father[14] or her sister[15] or her mother.[16]

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[14]Hyde, op.cit., Chapter 23.
[15]Ibid., Chapter 22.
[16]Ibid., Chapter 4.

The lack of confidence displayed by later writers such as Janet Frame and Sylvia Ashton-Warner is less than that displayed by Hyde. For most of her novels Janet Frame allows the point of view to be that of the mind of her character. Occasionally the reader realises, however, that there is still an external narrator overseeing all that goes on. This becomes apparent in comments such as the following about Amy Withers in Owls Do Cry: "She was afraid of her husband".[17] It is obvious in A State of Siege also, particularly as in this novel the reader has much more the impression of seeing the world from inside Malfred Signal's head. Yet it is the external narrator looking in at Malfred who makes the following observations about her after her tortuous night during the storm:

> She looked now like a tired woman who, unable to sleep, had got up to make herself a cup of tea, perhaps to take a sleeping pill, and on her way to the kitchen she had stopped to glance at the window; perhaps thinking, I'm safe. It's been a wild night, I must go to sleep soon. [18]

Frame feels the need to make explanations to her readers, because she cannot assume that she shares with them the same idea of what is significant that the realistic novelist can assume he shares with his readers.

Sylvia Ashton-Warner retains even greater control of the minds of her characters. In her first novel, Spinster, the protagonist Anna Vorontosov describes herself as being a person with no top layer to her mind.[19] The reader assumes from this that the primary interest of the novel lies in the mind of Anna and that as a consequence of this he (the reader) will see and experience the events of the novel only

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[17] Owls Do Cry, op.cit., page 17.
[18] A State of Siege, loc.cit.
[19] Sylvia Ashton-Warner, Spinster (1959; rpt. Penguin Books, Middlesex, 1961), page 85.

as Anna herself sees and experiences them. He assumes that the novel will be directed from inside Anna's head. This is not so. At several occasions in the novel the reader realises that his knowledge of what is happening is superior to that of Anna. An example of this occurs at the burial of the young teacher colleague of Anna, Paul Vercoe. Anna wonders at the funeral why the schoolgirl Wharepita screams so much and tries to get into Paul's grave; she wonders also why Paul is buried in the same grave as Wharepita's miscarried twins. The reader knows that the twins are also Paul's, and that Wharepita screams because Paul has been her lover.[20] In this novel the illusion is created that the reader is following the flow of the main character's thoughts, but the reader soon realises that he knows more than Anna, and he knows more because the author has refused to allow her full control over the narrative.

This lack of certainty is part of the development of this mode of fiction. It does not mean that either Frame or Ashton-Warner is not a subjective novelist, because for so much of their fiction the reader is in fact inside the minds of their respective characters. More recent novels, however, display a confidence not present in much of the work of earlier novelists. In Michael Henderson's novel, The Log of a Superfluous Son, for example, his protagonist, Osgar Senney, controls the pattern and the flow of the narrative. As the title indicates, the novel is told in the form of journal entries, and this in itself imposes an order over the wanderings of Osgar's mind. The entries which refer to Osgar's childhood on his father's farm and at Nelson Boys' College are carefully selected so that they contribute to the

[20]Ibid., page 169.

total picture which Osgar wants to convey about himself and about New Zealand.[21] No reference is ever made in this novel to the point of view of any other person. There are two reasons why Henderson makes no concessions to other points of view. One is that his material is very much part of the dominant tradition of the realistic novel. Osgar is a young European male, fit enough to work on a cattle boat going to Korea. He is not part of the population ignored by the realistic novel. Added to this is the fact that Henderson's novel is preceded by a relatively large number written in this mode of fiction, so that writing in this way has by 1975, when his novel was published, become an acceptable way of interpreting New Zealand experience.

The point of view of the subjective novel does to some extent determine the limitations of time and space of that type of novel. Because changes in the mind occur so much more rapidly than changes in the physical self, much less time is needed to cover large areas of experience in the inner world of a character. Locked inside the mind of a character, the novelist and the reader do not need to move far in order to discover how this character functions.

This brief examination of the point of view in both realistic and subjective novels demonstrates the superiority of the form of the subjective novel. The reader of the subjective novel has a much fuller picture of the characters in that novel; the form allows for a much wider variety of experience to be interpreted than is possible in the realistic novel. The richness of the subjective novel will become more apparent as I examine other formal aspects which are

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[21] Michael Henderson, The Log of a Superfluous Son (John McIndoe, Dunedin, 1975), pages 18-26. This section of the novel is examined in more detail in the section entitled "The Male Vision".

influenced by the point of view.

TIME

For the subjective novelist time is seen as "a kind of eternal present".[22] For the realistic novelist, however, time is "viewed optimistically as linear; that is, a largely secular view of history as the record of man's progress ... from the barbarous past to the civilized light".[23] For the subjective novelist the "future shall somehow blossom out of the past",[24] both past and future being held together in the eternal present moment captured in the consciousness of the character of the subjective novel. Past and future for the realistic novelist are, as Virginia Woolf expressed it, like "a series of gig lamps"[25] - once one lamp is passed its glow fades and it becomes unimportant. The light of the lamp ahead is scarcely visible and therefore insignificant. Only the isolated present moment matters, provided it is a moment in the progress towards a better state.

The notion that life progresses "optimistically" indicates that there will be certain limitations in the activities of the protagonists of realistic novels, in that they will become involved only in events that will lead them eventually to an end that is seen as better than where they began. The "civilized light" at which these characters arrive is sometimes merely a better physical life without any increase in self-awareness. A good example of this occurs

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[22] Leon Edel, The Modern Psychological Novel (Peter Smith, Gloucester, Mass., 1972), page 97.

[23] W.J. Harvey, Character and the Novel (Chatto & Windus, London, 1965), page 103.

[24] Virginia Woolf, A Writer's Diary, ed. Leonard Woolf (The Hogarth Press, London, 1954), page 102.

[25] Virginia Woolf, "Modern Fiction", 1966; rpt. David Lodge, ed., Twentieth Century Literary Criticism (Longman, London, 1972), page 88.

in Guthrie Wilson's The Feared and the Fearless, in which the main aim is to move to a situation where the violent madman Brutto no longer exists. His removal is effected by his being shot by a policeman, thus making life safe for everyone else. No one has come to any greater awareness of life as a result of what has happened during the novel; nor is Brutto dealt with by changing his moral view so that violence is seen by him to be an unacceptable way of operating.[26] Limited though many realistic novels are, few reach the narrow limits of this novel. Most realistic novels in New Zealand make some gesture towards the moral development of their characters, so that by the end of the novel not only are the characters' physical lives more comfortable, but their degree of self-awareness is also greater.

Moral and physical progress occur in Jane Mander's novel The Story of a New Zealand River. Alice Roland must come to realise the folly of her moral views before she is free to marry David Bruce, and thus provide a happy ending to the novel. Alice learns a new moral code, mainly through David Bruce and Asia, and this new morality allows her a more comfortable physical life. Alice's moral education occurs through a series of events which happen in chronological order. When nothing of significance happens in Alice's moral development, it is possible for Mander to pass over those years or months without more than mentioning that time has passed. So several years can pass between the end of Part Two of the novel when Tom Roland tries to commit suicide, and the beginning of Part Three when Asia is eighteen and about to cause her mother further self-examination by announcing an intention to leave home and earn her

[26]Guthrie Wilson, The Feared and the Fearless (Robert Hale Ltd., London, 1954).

own living.[27]

Similarly, Noel Hilliard in Maori Girl devotes comparatively little space to Netta Samuel's childhood because it is important to his theme only in setting the scene of the idyllic rural family life she has led before she goes to the city.[28] For the same reason nearly a year is allowed to elapse without mention of what happens during that year, between the time that Arthur and Netta split up and the occasion in the pub when Arthur sees Netta after she has had the baby.[29] The intervening year was presumably packed with incident for Netta, yet for Hilliard it is of no interest if he cannot use that time to make some comment about Netta's lot as a Maori in a European-dominated society.

The realistic novelist is interested in his character at a crucial stage in his life. So Jane Mander takes Alice Roland at a stage in her life when moral re-education has a perceptible goal: the acquisition of David Bruce. Noel Hilliard is most concerned with Netta Samuel as an adult because it is then that the prejudices against her as a Maori become most explicit. Dan Davin takes Martin Cody in Not Here, Not Now at a stage in his life when he is going to be able to win many desirable prizes: a wife, a Rhodes scholarship, and power within the university structure. Davin is also concerned with Martin's moral development, that Martin should be a better person at the end of the novel than he is at the beginning. The two aims of the novel are incompatible - Martin cannot obtain the worldly goods he desires and retain his integrity. So he (and Davin) settle for the worldly goods, and Martin's character suffers as a

[27]Mander, op.cit., pages 158-159.
[28]Noel Hilliard, op.cit., pages 9-68.
[29]Ibid., page 254.

consequence. That Martin realises the limitations of his ambitions has been indicated before, but Martin's remorse leads to no better conduct on his part.

Moral development cannot be treated in the external way that Davin treats it, nor can it be seen as a development that occurs in a linear fashion, as physical development can be. The divisions of Not Here, Not Now occur when Martin has acquired something, not when he has gained greater self-awareness. It takes Martin a year to win Delia Egan, a woman who is academically, socially and sexually superior to Martin. She is therefore a prize worth having, and Martin sacrifices his own moral development in order to win her. He has to hurt other women in order to have Delia, and he has to make himself tough to prove he is worth having. He must prove to her - and he does - that "she didn't know the man she was dealing with".[30] The first two parts of the novel are devoted to this year during which Delia is acquired. At the end of that section Delia has gone home to the family farm, because her mother has died. Out of Dunedin and away from the university, she has few temptations to stray away from Martin. Her isolation increases her dependence on him, and there is no danger that he will lose this prize.

Between the end of Part II and the beginning of Part III, two years elapse. Martin is now on the path towards the Rhodes scholarship. That changes have occurred in his personality is indicated by the following observation that he makes about himself as he saw himself during those two years:

> It must have been Delia's being called home when her mother died that had made him turn outwards, go to parties he wouldn't have gone to, talk to

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[30]Davin, op.cit., page 60.

> people he wouldn't have talked to. But they wouldn't have talked to him once, either. He must have changed, become a character in the place, secretary of this, vice-president of that, always getting firsts in exams and yet a player of games, someone who danced well and was good at smart conversation. [31] [My emphasis.]

How much Martin has changed; yet how unimportant Davin obviously finds the process of those changes. The changes are important here because they will enable Martin eventually to win the Rhodes scholarship. Davin cannot cope with moral development because it is not something that occurs in a linear fashion. His use of the word "must" to indicate the reasons for the changes in Martin's personality suggests that an investigation of the reasons for these changes is beyond him, that the whole thing is a matter for speculation only, a mysterious area best left alone.

Despite occasional suggestions to the contrary, the five years of the novel are devoted to the winning of two things: Delia and the Rhodes scholarship. Progress is only made when each is achieved. Morally Martin regresses, yet Davin fails to see this. He is so concerned in moving Martin chronologically from one achievement to the next that he does not see until it is too late that morally Martin is a reprehensible creature. This is the limitation of a linear approach to time. It does not allow the author to see his character in a rounded, three-dimensional fashion. Martin Cody is a two-dimensional character moving from one event to the next, pausing occasionally to regret what this movement is doing to his moral self, yet being incapable of rectifying the situation. The material that Davin wishes to deal with is unsuitable to the form of the realistic novel, yet Davin consistently fails to realise this.

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[31] Ibid., page 147.

The subtlest indictment of the attitude taken towards time in the realistic novel comes from Janet Frame in The Adaptable Man. Among other things, Frame expresses her concern at the inability of the traditional forms of the novel to interpret the experiences of the twentieth century. Patrick Evans comes to the following conclusions about the novel's form, after quoting Jenny Sparling's parodies of existing novel forms:[32]

> These skillful parodies are something more than the five-finger exercises of an extremely gifted writer. They bespeak an attitude which questions the ability of conventional forms of art to contain life, and a desire to experiment with forms which expand the boundaries of fiction. If one applies to fiction and its traditions Janet Frame's dislike of the formal and the traditional as well as her distrust of man's verbal heritage as it has developed, certain contradictions ought inevitably to occur. In The Adaptable Man the organic and lyrical elements are set side by side with the traditional in a way which sees the steady erosion of the latter. It is possible, in fact, to see the whole work as a quest for fictional adaptability.[33]

Among the conventional forms which are questioned in this novel is the allegiance of the novel to chronological time, to time which progresses in a linear fashion towards some end which is viewed as being better than the past or the present. The most obvious way that Frame does this is to give to her characters certain attitudes towards time, and to examine these attitudes and declare them to be either true or false. Russell Maude and his son Alwyn occupy the two extreme positions in the argument presented. Alwyn "was enclosed, sewn up in the present time, as a body is sewn at sea in a canvas shroud, before burial".[34] The simile

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[32] Janet Frame, The Adaptable Man (The Pegasus Press, Christchurch, 1965), page 135.
[33] Patrick Evans, Janet Frame (Twayne Publishers, U.S.A., 1977), page 136.
[34] The Adaptable Man, op.cit., page 156.

indicates Frame's disapproval of Alwyn's position. His father is in no better a state. Russell Maude is "so far in yesterday that he needed artificial aids - telescope, microscopes, in order to observe the present moment".[35] In a novel where praise is reserved only for nature and for those people whose empathy is with natural things, the use of the word "artificial" in connection with Russell marks him out as doomed in Frame's view.

Her other characters arrange themselves in varying degrees between these two extremes. Aisley Maude, Russell's brother and Alwyn's uncle, has no sympathy with Alwyn's addiction to the present moment. He feels his greatest affinity with St Cuthbert:

> He thought of his early and life-long obsession with St. Cuthbert, of the youthful way in which he as a student had imagined that simplicity in living meant always shutting the material shop and staring silently through the display window at the world; such simplicity could mask, behind the glass of separation, an undreamed-of world of complexity; it had suited St. Cuthbert; it had helped to make him a saint; he had been the actor performing against the dark bare back-cloth; the light of attention and devotion had shone upon him.
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> Aisley remembered that he himself had wanted to lead a life similar to St. Cuthbert's. He had reckoned without the twentieth century. [36]

Though Aisley feels so strongly about the figure from the past, he is less locked in the past than Russell, who refuses to move into the present. Aisley has adapted, regretfully, to life in the twentieth century, but he has not committed himself wholly to it in the way Alwyn has. There is qualified approval for Aisley's stance, but he is not given an authentic attitude to time. That is reserved for Bert Wattling, a native of the village of Little Burgelstatham in

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[35] Ibid., page 205.
[36] Ibid., pages 208-209.

which the novel is set. Only he, Ruby Unwin and Olly Drew are true inhabitants of the place of the novel; all the other characters are immigrants into it. "Perhaps Bert Wattling was the one true native of Little Burgelstatham" remarks Frame, and having delivered this accolade she goes on to examine, and praise, Bert's attitude towards the passage of time. Bert remembers the village as it was before it was invaded by immigrants from other parts of England. His memory of the past gives him power, but he does not dwell solely in the past as Russell Maude does.

> One might suppose, then, that Bert was an antiquarian like Russell and Aisley, but that was not so; his life was lived strictly within his own time which, since he was now an elderly pensioner, had the privilege of being referred to in the phrase 'within living memory'. ...
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> No, Bert was not concerned to dive off into possibility and fantasy and the dark waves of other people's memories - his own memory was a long enough and firm enough plank to parade up and down on without his ever needing to take the plunge into the past. [37]

The conclusions reached about the novelistic use of time in The Adaptable Man are fully demonstrated in the novel which follows this one, A State of Siege. As Patrick Evans has observed, the passage of time in The Adaptable Man is precisely noted, and the reader knows the ages of all the characters, and at what stage in the past certain events have happened.[38] But Frame's concern in this novel is not with demonstrating the dichotomy between chronological and psychological time. In A State of Siege this dichotomy is much more simply shown because the novel centres on the consciousness of one character, Malfred Signal. In this novel Frame uses chronological time as a controlling device,

[37] Ibid., page 104.
[38] Evans, op.cit., page 137.

in a way that subjective novelists have very often used it. W.J. Harvey has observed that "the more centrally a novel is located in a subjective consciousness, then the more the novelist has to compensate by stressing not objective, natural time, ... but simple, mechanical time".[39] Chronological time not only controls the novel to some extent; the limitations of mechanical time make the reader aware of how limitless time is in the consciousness of one individual. As in the case of Bert Wattling, Malfred Signal's memory is limited to what she knows, rather than going off into the memory of anyone else.

In A State of Siege six days of Malfred's physical life pass, but nearly thirty years pass in her inner life. The first five days pass quickly and almost without incident as she settles down to a life of retirement on the island of Karemoana in the Hauraki Gulf. The atmosphere is established for the events which follow and which cover the remaining day. On this last day Malfred paints a picture which contains no people, a fact which distinguishes it from her previous paintings. Malfred is now truly alone and can begin to lay siege to the "'room two inches behind the eyes'", a room which "for forty years she had kept ... locked".[40] The siege takes up the time between nine o'clock, when she goes to bed, and three o'clock the following morning, when she gets up to make a cup of tea. At that stage a stone covered in newspaper bearing the words "Help, Help, and last century's or tomorrow's news in verse"[41] is thrown through the window, Malfred reads it, and dies.

During these six hours Malfred has travelled back in

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[39] Harvey, op.cit., page 106.
[40] A State of Siege, op.cit., page 14.
[41] Ibid., page 229.

her mind to the time when she was twenty-eight (she is now fifty-three so the period covered is twenty-five years), and forward a little to anticipate what she will do in her future life on the island. All the moments of reflection and anticipation are contained in the one present period of Malfred's mind. The juxtaposition of the movement of her mind, unconstrained by mechanical time, with the passage of mechanical time makes clear the extent to which the mind does not conform to mechanical time. Time is not linear but web-like, held together in the centre as a web is by the consciousness of the character of the novel.

"There is no past, present or future. Using tenses to divide time is like making chalk marks on water", wrote Janet Frame in Faces in the Water.[42] While this expresses very accurately Frame's own attitude to time, it also expresses very clearly the difference that exists between the subjective novelist and those novelists for whom there is in their fiction very obviously past, present, and future, and for whom tenses are marks on the paper that cannot be erased.

SPACE

> In a sense, it is a spatial enigma which pervades the New Zealand scene and reinforces the myth of a raw, pioneer, rural society. For New Zealand's space is occupied by mountains, bush and farmland. They intrude physically into most New Zealanders' movement, thoughts, and actions. Yet it is in tiny pockets of city space that the New Zealand way of life is nurtured. The New Zealander has never consciously come to terms with this dualism; it is part of him. [43]

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[42] Janet Frame, Faces in the Water (George Braziller, New York, 1961), page 37.

[43] T. McGee, "The Social Ecology of New Zealand Cities" in John Forster, ed., Social Process in New Zealand (Longman Paul, Auckland, 1969), page 147.

The realistic novelist subscribes to this "spatial enigma"; the subjective novelist uses the "tiny pockets of city space" as the setting for his or her novels. The sense of space in the realistic novel is based on a myth; in the subjective novel the sense of space is true to the experience of most New Zealanders. In The Adaptable Man, Janet Frame expresses the same sentiment as that above when she writes:

> The truly adaptable man is not only time-minded like Aisley, Alwyn, Russell, Greta, who believe that they have chosen their ideal climate of time; he is also place-minded, and may range the world - earth and space - to find the environment that he needs to grow and blossom in. [44]

I have already shown how inauthentic Frame considers the attitude to time of Aisley, Alwyn, Russell and Greta. A person with a similar attitude to place can be considered to be equally false. Apart from that, Frame makes clear through her "one true native", Bert Wattling, that a person who thinks of the world as his to possess is in error. Of Bert she writes:

> From the way Bert talked, one would think he'd been born on the spot, in the midst of the market gardens, watching over it and its ghosts all his life; when he walked about in his heavy wellingtons it often seemed a wonder that he was able to lift his feet from the earth without pulling up his own roots. [45]

Bert Wattling occupies one of McGee's "small spaces". The difference between his spatial experiences and those of the protagonists of realistic novels becomes apparent when one compares a novel like Maurice Shadbolt's An Ear of the Dragon with The Adaptable Man. Shadbolt's protagonist is a novelist, Frank Firth. Firth writes the same kind of novels

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[44] The Adaptable Man, op.cit., page 254.
[45] Ibid., page 104.

as Shadbolt himself, and he claims for himself the true interpretation of the experience of living in New Zealand. Frank Firth has "contrived a prose to discover a country". While he has been involved in this mammoth task his contemporaries have been "proclaiming self-discovery in little literary magazines, celebrating their sexual experience in verse ...".[46] The use of the word "little" to describe the vehicle through which these writers reach their audience immediately alerts the reader to the smallness of the content of those who write differently from Firth. The recognition of any alternative mode of writing is unusual in a realistic novel; so too is the defensive attitude which Firth adopts about his own writing.

In An Ear of the Dragon Shadbolt makes explicit the belief of the realistic novelist in New Zealand that the country is his to interpret in the way he wishes, and that his interpretation is the authentic one. Frank Firth's subject matter is nothing less than the whole country:

> The land itself, its bulky volcanic shapes, plains and peaks, skies and seas was the only adequate protagonist ... A country where few felt really at home. Though Frank did sometimes ... It was his world, and he made the best of it. [47]

Although this is a claim for the truth of Frank's interpretation of life in New Zealand its limitations are immediately obvious. The fact that he claims the land itself as the only adequate protagonist means that he excludes human experience as being of secondary importance - a strange claim for any novelist. He is only interested in those who "feel at home" in that land, and as he realises himself there are few such people. The land as Frank Firth (and any other

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[46] Maurice Shadbolt, An Ear of the Dragon (Cassell & Company Ltd., London, 1971), page 31.
[47] Loc.cit.

realistic novelist) sees it is only accessible to those whose experiences are considered significant and acceptable in the society in which they live. That is a very small group, though it does include Frank Firth who is at this stage in the novel young and healthy, and who continues to be male and European.

The falseness of the myths to which Shadbolt subscribes is apparent in all his novels. His first work, Among the Cinders, offers a good case study of the extent to which a belief that the land is the only adequate protagonist is incompatible with other aims Shadbolt has for the novel. In Among the Cinders Shadbolt uses as his protagonist an adolescent boy, Nick Flinders. Nick, like Martin Cody and Alice Roland in their respective novels, is going to discover himself in the course of the novel. In order to do this, Nick leaves the small town where he has been living with his parents and goes first to his grandparents' place in an outer suburb of Auckland. Nick's grandfather has kept the place as it was originally, so that in a built-up suburb there are two acres of bush and scrub. For a time, this pseudo-countryside serves Nick's purposes. He is independent of his parents, in an environment where he is anonymous. His home town intrudes, however, in the person of a classmate, and, after Nick has had intercourse with her, he feels ready to leave for the real New Zealand landscape. Grandfather Flinders is more than willing to go with him; he is in fact the initiator of the trip that they make together. Through the education Nick is to gain on the trip, he will become a "real man" like his grandfather. Men now, according to Grandfather Flinders, are "castrated by apron strings".[48]

[48] Maurice Shadbolt, Among the Cinders (1965; rpt. Whitcoulls Publishers, Christchurch, 1975), page 75.

He tells Nick's father: "'You wouldn't believe it now, but men were men in this country once. It was a man's country. Now the women have taken over.'"[49] What constitutes a "man's country" becomes obvious as Nick and his grandfather make their trip through the North Island of New Zealand.

In order to become the kind of man Grandfather Flinders sees as "real", Nick must conquer the land as the pioneer generation conquered it. The only problem with this plan is that certain of the ingredients of that conquest are gone. There is very little gum in the gum fields, for example. Nick, however, is able to discover gum in a field presumed to have been dug over many years before. Nor is there any longer any necessity to cut down the forests manually - trees are milled systematically for housing, fuel and paper. The challenge of the forests is gone. Nick realises this and complains to his grandfather about the request that he fell a totara tree. The argument that develops between Nick and his grandfather over the felling of the tree reveals the reason behind the whole exercise.

Nick asks his grandfather: "'Do I have to?' 'Of course you have to', he growled. 'You'll never know otherwise.'" What Nick will never know if the totara remains in the forest is not made clear. As Nick continues to argue with his grandfather about the cutting down of the tree, his grandfather offers him the following rationale for their being where they are. He tells Nick:

> 'I knocked over a few hundred in my day.'
>
> 'But you had to', I said.
>
> 'And you don't have to', he answered. 'That's the bloody point, you anaemic little squirt. *You don't have to.*'
>
> I was shocked silent.

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[49] Ibid., page 77.

> 'You don't have to, so you won't', he raged on. 'Yes, I might have known it. You'll grow up like everyone else, all right. I might of known I been wasting my time...' [50]

Nick is busy conquering all the things that make up the myth of the New Zealand landscape. If it is there, it is ripe for exploitation; no other rationale is necessary; the presence alone of the tree is sufficient reason for its destruction. In the same way that he conquers the forest and the gumfields, he conquers the sea. He rescues a drowning woman from the surf. The reward in this instance is immediate - he seduces her later on the beach.[51] Women, along with the natural elements, are something to be conquered on Nick's quest for self-discovery.

One would expect that all this physical activity which covers a wide area of space would produce some very perceptive insights on Nick's part about himself, and possibly about the world in general. He has, after all, to paraphrase Frank Firth, discovered a country. The reader is entitled to expect to be enlightened about the nature of that country. But not only is that expectation not granted, the discoveries that Nick makes about himself are facile. Near the end of the novel he makes the following assessment of the year he has spent in voyages to discover himself - voyages, it should be noted, into the exterior of a country, not into the interior of himself:

> But I do think I learned something last summer. I don't think my head is entirely filled with useless information. I know some things for certain. I know, for example, that if I'm ever going to find anything, like on the day I searched for gum, then I'm probably going to find it when everyone else has gone to sleep on the job. And I know that when I find something, whatever it is, it's going to shine with my sweat. Because there's no other way. I know something

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[50] Ibid., page 212.
[51] Ibid., page 176.

> else too. I know that I've got to go through with the motions whether there's any colour at the end or not. It's just as important knowing how to go through the motions, without too much fuss, as actually finding the gold. In fact it's more important knowing how to go through the motions; because if you don't know, you're unlikely to strike any gold. Gold in any shape or form ... The trick is to know that you're going through the motions, and not kid yourself. And not kid yourself either that you're actually going to strike gold at the end. [52]

Nick's assessment of his quest is couched in pseudo-hip, psychological jargon that means little. The reader is entitled to ask if the long journey and the series of conquests that Nick has made in pursuit of his self is really justified when this facile conclusion is the only result. Nick has neither discovered a country nor discovered his self. It would be difficult to achieve both in the length of an average-sized novel such as Among the Cinders. Size is not the mitigating factor, however. What is at issue here is Shadbolt's inability to see that discovery of the self is not something accomplished by making journeys with the aura of mythic quests about them. Self-discovery requires thought and introspection, activities for which Nick Flinders shows himself singularly incapable.

In Man Alone, John Mulgan makes some attempt to dispel the spatial myth that permeates the thinking of New Zealanders. Though he makes a persuasive case for the hostility of the landscape he never denies the assumption implicit in all realistic novels that the entire country is the province of the characters of his novel.

Johnson, the novel's protagonist,[53] is not the central figure of the novel, as I have indicated before. At the centre of this novel is the New Zealand of the Depression.

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[52] Ibid., page 287.

[53] John Mulgan, Man Alone (1939; rpt. Paul's Book Arcade Ltd., Hamilton, 1960).

Mulgan does not pretend that he is interested in people; Johnson is a catalyst in Mulgan's search for the heart of a country he both loves and hates. Mulgan is therefore more honest than a novelist like Shadbolt. But like Shadbolt he subscribes to certain myths about New Zealand. He believes that the true New Zealand is in the bush, the mountains, and the sea. For this reason Johnson escapes a murder charge into bush, and then onto Mount Ruapehu. He finds salvation of a sort with Petersen, on whose boat he has worked and who lives by the sea.

The irony of Mulgan's addiction to the spatial myth of New Zealand is that he is using the novel to dispel certain other myths about New Zealand. Unlike novelists who preceded him he does not believe in New Zealand as a land to provide its inhabitants with physical comfort. The land for Mulgan is harsh, as it is in reality. It can be courted as Johnson courts it in his dangerous journey through bush, desert and mountain, but the land is always superior in the courtship. It can certainly never be won in the way that Grandfather Flinders suggests to Nick that it can be. In his attitude to the land, Mulgan is more honest than many novelists like him. But he still refuses to see that for most New Zealanders their experience of New Zealand is not the experience that Johnson has. Most inhabitants learn about the country and have their myths about the place in which they live dispelled by living in small urban spaces. Mulgan dispenses of one myth about the land, but he clings to another myth about it which is just as erroneous as the one he dismisses.

The realistic novelist perpetrates a false idea of the spatial experience of most New Zealanders. Along with this

false picture goes a conviction that the experience portrayed in the realistic novel is the only true New Zealand experience. The limitations of the experiences dealt with in the realistic novel have been suggested in the discussion of Man Alone and Among the Cinders. How possible alternative interpretations of the New Zealand experience are becomes obvious through an examination of certain subjective novels and the way that they convey the spatial experience of the New Zealanders in their novels.

As one would expect, the world of the subjective novel is small, and very often urban. In this respect it replicates the spatial experience of most New Zealanders more accurately than the world of the realistic novel does. The world of the subjective novel is not small for this reason alone, however. The limited space of the subjective world is, like the limited time, a controlling device used to suggest physical limits to the limitless imaginative world which dominates the novel.

The important events in the world of the subjective novel take place inside buildings, often in single rooms of those buildings. In Joy Cowley's novel The Mandrake Root the protagonist, Elizabeth Stilwell, shows she is escaping from the claustrophobic influence of her family and their attempts to destroy her vision of the world by leaving the family home for the flat that her brother Harvey occupied. In that flat, now occupied by the practical and helpful Josie, Elizabeth is given the strength to resist her family's attempts to destroy her vision. Josie in particular makes her believe in the authenticity of her own vision of the world. The physical movement that she makes from one building to another is a symbol of the emotional movement

that she makes. The physical freedom that Elizabeth has in the flat is a metaphor for the emotional and imaginative freedom that she gains. In leaving her family and their limited vision of the world which they try to make her conform to, Elizabeth allows herself room to explore who she is. Her process of self-discovery is made by moving across Wellington, not by moving through a whole country. Elizabeth has no need to discover a country in order to discover herself.

What Elizabeth discovers about herself is no more significant than what Nick Flinders discovers about himself, but Cowley never claims that Elizabeth's self-discovery is anything more than her own achievement. Elizabeth's process of self-awareness involves to a large extent recognising facets of her own life and experience that she has been taught to hide. So she has to acknowledge that her attempt at suicide has really happened and that it is an experience that is part of her. When her sister tries to get her to have plastic surgery to cover the scars on her wrist, she tells her that the attempt at suicide "'It's a part of me.'"[54] Covering it up is to deny part of Elizabeth herself. In the same way she has to realise that her painting which she has hidden from her family is also a part of herself. She tells Pete, a prospective lover, that she is beginning to feel stronger because of her painting:

> 'I'm real now. I feel the things I touch and when I think my mind is quick. Not like something trying to move in quicksand. I'm real because my painting, what I do, is real.' [55]

The self-discovery is small, and the space in which it occurs is small. There is a unity between Cowley's use of physical

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[54]Joy Cowley, The Mandrake Root (Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1975), page 234.
[55]Ibid., page 245.

space as a metaphor and as a device to control the narrative and her portrayal of Elizabeth's journey into her own emotional and imaginative space. Realistic novelists rarely seem able to match their use of physical and symbolic detail in such a way.

In Janet Frame's novel, A State of Siege, Malfred Signal's self-discovery follows a similar course. Malfred is concerned to discover the contents of what she calls "'the room two inches behind the eyes'".[56] Her voyage of discovery takes place during one night in the bedroom of a house she has bought on the island of Karemoana. Imaginatively Malfred travels over five hundred miles to her old home in Matuatangi to relive events that happened there up to twenty-five years previously. Physically she never leaves the cottage on Karemoana, and only twice does she leave her bed. Though the physical space in which learning takes place is small, the extent of the material covered is very large - the whole of Malfred's life, and the meaning of that life. At the end of her journey, Malfred has no new practical skills. She does not need them. Her deficiency in the past has been to rely on her practical abilities to the detriment of her imaginative skills. At the end of her life she is granted a limited insight into the part of her life she has always considered valuable but which she has never bothered to explore or exploit. Neither Frame nor Malfred makes any claims for what Malfred has learnt. Malfred has learnt more about herself than many people learn, but less than she could have learnt with more insight than she has been given. The extent of her learning becomes apparent when she lays siege to the room two inches behind

[56] A State of Siege, op.cit., page 14.

her eyes, and discovers that she is in the broom cupboard in her home in Matuatangi:

> Recovering from the shock of the changed nature of her dream-room she had the presence of mind and the sense of humour to realise that a broom cupboard was on a slightly higher plane than a wood shed which, if truth were known, so many people inhabited. [57]

Malfred does not know all she could know; the assumption about Nick Flinders' year of self-discovery is that because of the nature of his voyage he does know all there is to know. Once again a subjective novelist has combined technique in her use of physical space as a device to control the narrative with the subject matter of her exploration of the limitless imaginative space of her character in a more satisfying manner than any realistic novelist does. She has also provided the reader with a more authentic study of one journey of self-discovery than any realistic novelist provides.

Just as the subjective novelist uses mechanical time both to anchor her or his world and to prove the timeless nature of it, so too he or she uses tangible and visible space in which to ground the vast world of his or her character's consciousness. The subjective novelist shares with the realistic novelist a very strong sense of place - Janet Frame's Waimaru is as clearly delineated as Dan Davin's Southland landscape, but for rather different reasons.

The strong sense of place in the subjective novel is not so much a creation of a place that can be identified on a map as it is a creation of an atmosphere. The subjective novelist is not as interested in the physical spaces which his or her characters inhabit, as he or she is concerned with the perceptions the characters have of that place. Two of

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[57] Ibid., page 218.

Joy Cowley's novels are set in Wellington: Nest in a Falling Tree and The Mandrake Root. The reader needs no map of the city to understand the journeys that the respective protagonists of those two novels make. Both of them - Maura Prince and Elizabeth Stilwell - make journeys into the interior of their own minds, journeys for which there is no map or compass, because each journey of this kind is unique to the individual who makes it. In contrast to this is the provision of a map in Lawrence Jones' edition of Dan Davin's novel Roads from Home.[58] This map is important for the reader because it explains how and where things happen in the novel. It is important also because to a large extent the roads that are travelled in Davin's novel are not the roads of the soul, as he would like to imagine, but physical roads to which a map can be appended. The careful descriptions of Wellington in both of Cowley's novels remind the reader how unknown the space of Elizabeth's and Maura's minds is, and how uncharted the voyage is that they make.

The landscape of subjective novels is used to create atmosphere. In Janet Frame's Owls Do Cry the suburban and urban landscape threatens because it is man-made. The nastiness of Waimaru is part of the larger evil which will shut out the vision of the world held by people like Daphne Withers and close them up in a mental asylum. There is nothing pleasant about the landscape of Frame's novels, because it is a landscape from which her characters are alienated. One could provide a map to the town of Waimaru from Frame's description of it, but what is important about the town to her is not its physical contours but its

[58] Dan Davin, Roads from Home (1949; rpt. Auckland University Press/Oxford University Press, Auckland, 1976), pages xx-xxi.

threatening and sterile atmosphere.

> But, about the town. You should read a booklet that you may buy for five shillings and sixpence, reduced at sale time to five shillings, increased at Christmas to six shillings.

Right from the beginning of her account of the town Frame is determined to make clear how the town will exploit anyone who expresses an interest in it. Furthermore, the town is a merchandisable object, traded on like any "special" in the supermarket. It has no soul. Frame continues by outlining the "important things" mentioned in the booklet. All of them are significant because they mean "prosperity and wealth and a fat-filled land". Even the sea threatens:

> and lastly a photograph of the foreshore with its long sweep of furious and hungry water, the roll-down sea the children call it, where you cannot bathe without fear of the undertow, and you bathe carefully, as you live, between the flags; and beware of the tentacles of sea-weed and the rush of pebbles being sucked back and back into the sea's mouth each time it draws breath.

The sea and the town are determined to capture their inhabitants, suck them in as the undertow does to a world where only physical wealth is important. The only saving grace of the whole environment of Waimaru is Friendly Bay where Peg Winter comes to sell icecreams and sweets. The important thing about Peg, however, is that she does not belong in Waimaru; she "moves like faith from town to town".[59]

In the same way the island of Karemoana is seen as threatening to Malfred Signal long before she begins her exploration of the room two inches behind the eyes. Malfred looks out of her window at the gorse and manuka and is worried by their continual flowering:

> one gets from contemplating them, not the expected delight in spring blossom but perhaps the feeling

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[59] Owls Do Cry, op.cit., page 18.

> of horror roused by the prospect of everlasting life, as if this island were an island of the Gods where the inhabitants stay young, paralysed in growth, like the lovers on the Grecian Urn, and where the flowers are never buds, never drop their withered petals, but stay for ever in full bloom. [60]

One is prepared by this observation on the horror of the everlasting for Malfred's death at the end of the novel. Frame feels that the vision of the world of her chosen characters - Daphne, Istina, Malfred, Bert Wattling, Turnlung, Milly Galbraith - is constantly threatened from without, both by man-made and by natural forces.

Joy Cowley does not see her characters' vision of the world as being threatened in the same way. People threaten her characters but they are often strong enough to resist. Nature rarely threatens in the manner that it does in Frame's novels. In Nest in a Falling Tree and Man of Straw the protagonists of each novel, Maura Prince and Rosalind Jonsson, are involved in encounters with natural elements which seem destructive to them. Maura falls down a bank when she is on a picnic with her adolescent lover, Percy, and dislodges a gull's nest. The event is seen as symbolic of her relationship with Percy - the nest she has created for him will be destroyed by an outside force and like the gull he will fly away.[61] In Man of Straw Rosalind runs away from the awful prospect of adult life, falls down a cliff and dies. In both these events it is humanity rather than nature which threatens these two women.

It is Robin Hyde in The Godwits Fly who first showed the possibility of interpreting the New Zealand landscape without exploiting it. Hyde limits herself to one environ-

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[60] A State of Siege, op.cit., page 45.
[61] Joy Cowley, Nest in a Falling Tree (Secker & Warburg, London, 1967), pages 175-176.

ment - the city of Wellington - for most of the novel. Hyde's intention is to anchor Eliza's emotional and imaginative life in a clearly described physical landscape. Apart from that aim, there is Hyde's obvious affection for and delight in the Wellington landscape. To her it is familiar and yet beautiful. She does not take it for granted, nor does she romanticise it. Her achievement is apparent when one compares her descriptions with something like the following from Jane Mander's The Story of a New Zealand River:

> There was a riotous spring colour in the forest, voluptuous gold and red in the clumps of yellow kowhai and the crimson rata, and there were masses of greeny white clematis and bowers of pale tree ferns to rest the satiated eye. Stiff laurel-like puriris stood beside the drooping fringe of the lacy rimu; hard blackish kahikateas brooded over the oak-like ti-koti with its lovely scarlet berry. [62]

Hyde does not feel the need to prove the New Zealand landscape by listing exotic species of trees; more importantly, she does not need to compare what she sees in Wellington with anything outside that environment. In the following description of Wellington Harbour only the mention of gum trees gives any clue to its location. Most apparent is Hyde's and Eliza's affection for this landscape and their identity with it, giving each a security not granted to characters like Alice Roland, so that Eliza is free to explore her imaginative world because the physical world is already known.

> Those long hills were very ridgy. From their summer grass, larks and sparrows blew out, light as chaff. Blue-gums, slim ship's mast trees with sickle leaves, were planted on the harbour side, far down lay white roads and the Gardens, old three-decker houses with red tin roofs. Then, misted in vague creeping blues that sometimes went to jewel colours, the city spread out,

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[62]Mander, op.cit., page 9.

> searching after its seas. It found them in most different places - sometimes intercepted by suburbs, sometimes in scalloped bays, or running lean and very much alive, a questing beast, up channels between hill and hill. [63]

Eliza does not have to contend with all the physical elements of the New Zealand landscape as Nick Flinders has to. The physical setting of The Godwits Fly is clearly described, as is the physical setting of most other subjective novels. But it is not an end in itself. It is a grounding for the important journeys into the interior that the characters make. Hyde's evocation of the physical landscape of her novel shows that when a novelist wishes to do more than merely describe the setting of her novel, she is more likely than a realistic novelist to "contrive a prose to discover a country".[64]

For the subjective novelist physical space is important for two reasons. In it the emotional and imaginative world which is the concern of the subjective novel can be grounded. The small size of the physical space which the subjective novelist chooses to use emphasises the limitless space of the mind and imagination. Incidental to these two uses of space is the evocation of a particular place such as occurs in Hyde, Frame and Cowley. And there is, as I showed in Frame's novels, the use of the physical setting to heighten the atmosphere of doom which pervades most of her works.

In the subjective novel there is a unity between the novelist's use of physical space and his or her use of imaginative and emotional space. Such unity does not occur in realistic novels. There is also in the subjective novel

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[63] Hyde, op.cit., page 107.
[64] An Ear of the Dragon, loc.cit.

a more accurate evocation of the spatial experiences of most New Zealanders than occurs in the realistic novel.

DEATH

The treatment of certain themes in realistic and subjective novels is determined to a large extent by the use made of the three formal aspects examined previously. The treatment of death in each type of novel is influenced by the use made of time. In the realistic novel time is seen and used as a linear progression towards something better than what exists in the present and has existed in the past. In this context death is very final. Because the realistic novel is concerned primarily with its characters' external life, the end of the body marks the end of the life considered significant by the realistic novelist. For this reason death is feared. Despite that, death can sometimes be useful to the realistic novelist. It can be a means of ridding the novel of a character who has outlived his or her usefulness. Once dead, they disappear. There is no concept of the non-physical self of a character being kept alive in the memories of other characters as happens in the subjective novel.

The usefulness of death in the realistic novel is exemplified by the death of Tom Roland in The Story of a New Zealand River. In order that Alice Roland can marry David Bruce, Tom must be dispensed with. Alice will not live in an adulterous relationship with Bruce, nor will she accept the divorce that Tom offers her. If the novel were twice as long and twice as discursive, Alice might finally come to realise that she could either live with Bruce or divorce Tom

(or both). Mander provides a quicker solution to the predicament her characters find themselves in. Tom Roland is killed when he brakes a load of timber he is driving down the tramway in order to avoid killing children who have strayed onto the track.[65] It is a hero's death. He earns himself a statue in the village for his bravery, and he wins Alice's sympathy, which he had never had before.

Despite the fact that Tom Roland's character is posthumously elevated, the act is gratuitous. Mander has to get her characters out of a situation she does not want them to remain in, so she kills off the person who is preventing the union of Alice and Bruce. There is an irony in the fact that all through the novel Mander is concerned with Alice's moral growth, yet she is quite prepared to commit the most immoral act of all - that of killing another human being - in order that Alice's moral development can reach its logical conclusion.

The characters of the realistic novel fear death and find it repellent. For them it is not an insignificant experience which they can afford to dismiss. It is a mystery which they cannot face. The most common reaction to death in the realistic novel is to run or hide from it. In the early part of Maurice Shadbolt's novel Among the Cinders the protagonist, Nick Flinders, goes on a hunting trip with a friend, Sam Waikai. Nick has saved Sam from certain death in a river. In return, so it seems, Sam becomes Nick's friend, rescuing him from a solitary existence that Nick's parents consider abnormal.[66] On the hunting trip Sam is killed because Nick sends him into a cave full of bones

[65]Mander, op.cit., page 293.
[66]Among the Cinders, op.cit., page 17.

without telling him what is there. Nick realises that Sam might consider the cave tapu. Sam comes out of the cave in terror and falls down a cliff outside it.[67] Nick feels guilty about his death - partly because he knew Sam would be worried about the burial cave, and partly because having saved him once from death he feels he should have been able to repeat the act here. There is no way that Nick can exorcise either his guilt or his suffering over Sam's death. Only the local policeman wants to know about the death, and all he wants are factual details. Nick spends as much time as he can in bed, hiding from the guilt and the pain. He never does confront the fact of Sam's death.

He runs away from it, first to bed, then to Auckland to his grandparents, and later to the bush with his grandfather. This latter escape is not only from Sam's death. It is from the intrusion of Te Ika, Nick's home town, in the form of a classmate. It is more importantly an escape from another death. Nick suspects that his grandmother has died, and that his grandfather has suggested their trip at this stage because he wants to escape something with which he cannot cope. "Something was bothering me, though, something about the whole business. But I just didn't have time to think."[68] It is the latter sentence that summarises exactly the attitude towards death in the realistic novel. It does not bear thinking about.

In realistic novels ostensibly devoted to the memory of a dead person, anything other than the dead person and the fact of death is dealt with. Maurice Gee's novel In My Father's Den begins with the death of Celia Inverarity, and

[67] Ibid., page 36.
[68] Ibid., page 133.

then goes back in time to investigate the events that have led to her murder. This searching for an explanation in the past is an avoidance of the fact of Celia's death. Paul Prior, from whose point of view the novel is told, does not want to admit that Celia is dead. To search for a motive is a way of ignoring her death. So the novel becomes finally "the story of my life"[69] (Paul's life), not an acceptance of Celia's death at all. At the end of the novel Paul has returned to Nelson ostensibly to mourn Celia, but "what I really mourn is my books. My poor burned books."[70] (Paul's brother, Andrew, who murdered Celia, has also set light to Paul's books.) This is a very revealing sentence. Paul is incapable of mourning a person, but quite capable of mourning the loss of his property. There is no clearer explanation of the attitude to death in the realistic novel than this. In putting property before person the realistic novel is subscribing to a generally held assumption in New Zealand society that property is more important than people. In accepting rather than challenging the assumptions of the society from which and for which novels are written the realistic novel is in this regard following the typical pattern of the realistic novel.[71]

The most explicit condemnation of the attitude taken towards death in the realistic novel comes in Janet Frame's novel The Adaptable Man:

> The most appalling piece of reasoning that man has ever concluded, against all evidence, is that death is a prime, convenient, perfect solver of problems. If ever there were a need for the human race to be proved insane, this piece of

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[69] Maurice Gee, In My Father's Den (Faber & Faber, London, 1972), page 175.
[70] Loc.cit.
[71] David Daiches, The Novel and the Modern World (Phoenix Books, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1970), page 1.

> reasoning would provide all proof. Death solves nothing. An exterminated race is not a vanished race; an assassinated ruler does not cease to exercise power. These are commonplaces, yet men everywhere continue to equate killing with getting rid of. It works with flies, vermin, weeds; how inconvenient that people who warm, breed, suck, prey on others, strangle their blossoming neighbours, are not yet flies, vermin and weeds, but remain people! People persist! [72]

That the attitude towards death evinced in the realistic novel is inauthentic is quite obvious from this quotation, as are the reasons why it is false. What an authentic attitude towards death would be is not made clear in this passage, though one can presume that such an attitude would at least consist of what a false attitude did not include. Such an attitude would not regard death as final, and it would not regard death in this way because death solves nothing, and because people are different from animals.

Frame's attitude to death, which is shared by other subjective novelists, becomes clearer in the contents of her novels rather than in passages of exposition such as the one above. Jeanne Delbaere-Garant[73] discusses the distinction that Frame makes between her characters on the basis of their attitudes to death. Those characters whom Frame considers authentic - Daphne Withers, Vera Glace, Godfrey Rainbird, Turnlung, for example - know death in a way that those she considers inauthentic do not. In the latter category can be found Chick Withers, Edward Glace and Alwyn Maude, for example, and it is through an exploration of the attitude to death of each of these characters and Frame's judgements on

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[72] The Adaptable Man, op.cit., page 146.

[73] Jeanne Delbaere-Garant, "Death as the Gateway to Being in Janet Frame's Novels" in Hena Maes-Jelinek, ed., Commonwealth Literature and the Modern World (Revue des Langue Vivants, Liege, 1975), page 147.

them that what she considers to be a "true" attitude towards death emerges.

In her latest novel, Daughter Buffalo, Frame's attitude towards death is most concisely revealed and her opposition to the attitude taken to death in the realistic novel is explored. In this novel an ageing New Zealand accountant, Turnlung, comes to New York for no particular reason. He meets Talbot Edelman, a young doctor specialising in death studies. (The view that enlightenment might come from a New Zealander is interesting when one considers how critical Frame has always been of her birthplace.) It is no accident that New York is chosen as the setting of the novel, for it is presented as a most sterile and inhuman place. Turnlung's attitude to death is made more obvious when it is contrasted with the sterility and impersonal nature of his surroundings.

Talbot Edelman believes that death is a clinical process, that it can be studied like anything else in a hospital or laboratory. In his studies death has been a "marvel of cleanliness, concealment and dispatch".[74] This ability to place death alongside any other clinical situation and behave in a neutral fashion towards it, is upset somewhat by what Talbot terms his "field" deaths. Death is not easy, or clean, and most often it is not quickly or simply concealed. Given his ambivalence towards death, Talbot is good material for the kind of education Turnlung wants to give him.

Turnlung's aim is for Talbot to arrive at an attitude towards death which he (Turnlung) considers acceptable. This attitude is best explained in one of the stories that

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[74] Janet Frame, Daughter Buffalo (W.H. Allen, London, 1973), page 79.

Turnlung tells Talbot. It concerns a friend of Turnlung and her attempts to come to terms with the deaths of her two sisters. When the first one died, she turned to literature: Robert Browning's poem "Evelyn Hope", Edgar Allan Poe's poem "Annabel Lee" and an excerpt from Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass. When her second sister dies, she has only a story called "Gentleman from San Francisco" to console her. It is not sufficient, and in the vacuum created by the lack of literature to help her accommodate death the woman realises that there is another answer. The sister's body is brought back from where she drowned, in a train which is also carrying livestock:

> My sister in her coffin was put into the hearse to the accompaniment of an animal chorus, and as I watched and listened, I felt that I was being released from the tyrannical comparison with the story of the Gentleman from San Francisco, that Joy's death was being dislodged from the literary world and housed, with the animal cries, among the first earliest deaths I knew before I was enticed into the concealments of literature, among the animal deaths that concealed nothing, that continued naturally beyond the act of dying through the cycle of putrefaction, maggots, sculptured weathered bone, to fresh grass and yellow buttercups. [75]

Death must be seen as part of the natural cycle; to see it any other way is to be "enticed" into a vision that conceals the truth. Talbot must be made to see this.

Turnlung's method of education is to tell Talbot stories from his own death education:

> Each of us inherits for use in our death education a supply of private and public deaths as numerous and memorable as our supply of loves. [76]

He also introduces Talbot to as many natural things as he can find in New York. This is fairly difficult, of course, but Turnlung is quite successful in that he finds and "adopts" a

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[75]Ibid., page 74.
[76]Ibid., page 41.

young buffalo in Central Park Zoo, and he takes Talbot to the Museum of Natural History. The significance of the adoption of the buffalo is made explicit in the following passage:

> She is my jewel. The word has come into its own at last. She is my death-jewel,
> beauteous, and when she dies she will die a complete death, like a true animal
> lying upon the prairie,
> an instrument tuned by the wind, snow and sun
> played on by the hooves of the oldest galloping stars.
> I doubt if the music will fall on human ears. [77]

The idea of death as something of great price runs through the novel, and is a theme that has nothing in common with the attitude taken towards death in the realistic novel. In the end, Turnlung is not successful in his attempts to convert Talbot out of his inauthentic attitude to death. Talbot concludes as follows:

> The incidents I have written of took place ten years ago. I am still a young man. I am now Head of the Department of Death Education. My life since that summer has been ascetic and solitary and the closest I have been to love has been my involvement with death which, being a national involvement, should not therefore touch me more acutely, except that I, like the young mariner, have control of the crossbow or its equivalent, for use in my work. [78]

It is this last clause which suggests that Talbot would have been capable of conversion to Turnlung's point of view. He is now caught between two attitudes, knowing one to be true but not able to adopt it. In this respect he resembles certain other characters of Frame, living like Toby Withers in "a microscopic place of bitten oranges like blighted sun-fall, where neither the wind blowing the way forward nor the way back, articulate with ripe fruit of night could feed or make you whole".[79]

An authentic response to death can give the living strength, as Robin Hyde makes clear in The Godwits Fly.

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[77] Ibid., page 173.
[78] Ibid., page 207.
[79] Owls Do Cry, page 53.

When Eliza's child is stillborn she

> recognized in her mind an old companion. She felt neither happy nor unhappy, merely still ... When she was alone, words ran in her mind, measured themselves, a steady chain of which no link was weak enough to break. Long ago, she had called the power 'it'. It was years since her poems had fallen into a foolish little rubble of shards and ashes, schoolgirl sentimentality. This was different. It was the old power back; but with a stronger face, an estranged face, it sat down in the house of her mind. [80]

Eliza's poetic vision, nearly lost as she has neglected the inner world for the outer, has returned to her. Death gives her a gift; it is as Turnlung says in Daughter Buffalo, "a jewel". How many riches the characters of the realistic novel lose by not recognising that death is precious.

The value of death lies not in the tangible or visible benefits it gives, but in gifts for the inner world - the return of Eliza's poetry is a good example. Eliza will receive little that is tangible for the return of her poetic vision; the book of poetry she writes is ignored, as we see from John Hannay's futile attempts to give it shelf-room in a bookshop.[81] But this gift is valuable to Eliza because it gives her inner strength and enables her to acknowledge the death of her baby.

In a similar way Elizabeth Stilwell gains inner strength in Joy Cowley's novel The Mandrake Root when she recognises that Harvey, who has been both her brother and her lover, is dead. The Stilwell family wants to pretend that Harvey never lived, and therefore never died. They do not want to hear the records that brought him fame and riches.[82] They will not tell the truth about his death to Elizabeth, because in the telling they are admitting that Harvey did

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[80]Hyde, op.cit., page 207.
[81]Ibid., pages 223-226.
[82]The Mandrake Root, op.cit., page 78.

die. All they want is the formal gesture of visiting his grave once a year. Even in doing that, however, they refuse to acknowledge what has happened to Harvey. When Elizabeth tries to talk to them about the futility of the ritual they go through and how that ritual obscures the fact of death, they put her out of the car. What she is saying is too terrifying for them. Her belief that "'Death supports life, That's the natural law.'" and her condemnation of their attitude "'But we support death, don't we. Because we're scared.'"[83] is too much for them to tolerate. It is Josie, who lives in the flat Harvey lived in before he died, who tells Elizabeth the facts about Harvey's death, and thus removes the mystery that has surrounded it. Elizabeth can then "know" Harvey's death, and the knowledge makes her whole.

By ignoring death as part of the natural cycle, the characters of the realistic novel deny themselves a pearl of great price. Yet their denial of death is based on the assumption that they are sparing themselves pain and suffering. How untrue such an assumption is becomes clear from the pain caused by denying death, and the jewels which death offers to those who acknowledge it.

ART

As I have indicated before, the interest of the realistic novel lies in the end product of the events recounted during the novel. The concern is to move towards the optimistic end which inevitably awaits the characters. The process by which this movement is made is much less

[83] Ibid., page 200.

important. In the subjective novel the interest centres on the present moment held in the consciousness of the characters of the novel; the concern is with process, rather than with product. This attitude influences the approach taken towards art in the realistic and subjective novel respectively.

In the realistic novel attention is focussed on the finished artistic product - the novel, book of poetry, piece of pottery, or painting. How that finished object arrived at that state is investigated little and seldom. This exemplifies once again the interest of the realistic novel with things that are tangible and visible; things that have a material presence, and that can be judged in monetary (and therefore physical) terms. In the realistic novel, the artistic product brings success, fame, and financial reward. (This is unrealistic in New Zealand, of course, because very few New Zealand artists of any kind become rich or famous because of their artistic activity.)

In Guthrie Wilson's novel Sweet White Wine, Simon Gregg writes a number of bestsellers, which give him enough money to abandon school-teaching and live off his writing. So lucrative is it that he can buy a house on Auckland's North Shore, and support himself, a socialite wife and all her hangers-on. Gregg is more honest about the process of his writing than many artists in realistic novels are:

> I still find it hard to talk of my own writings. I am prepared, when escape is impossible, to assemble words in answer to questioners who wish to know whether I write or type my manuscripts, how often I scratch my ears, how many words I set down at a sitting, or seek information about sales and marketing and royalties. But my writings for good or ill are whatever life has within me and I cannot speak of what I do not always myself understand. [84]

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[84] Guthrie Wilson, Sweet White Wine (Robert Hale Ltd., London, 1956), page 111.

There is a recognition on Simon's part of what he calls "the life within" though he claims to have no understanding of it. He is essentially a craftsman who assembles material given to him by something unknown, and to which he is not prepared to give a name. (He is not even willing to call his creative talent "it" as Eliza Hannay does, which would at least be an acknowledgement that it existed.)

I have referred before[85] to the novelist Frank Firth who appears in Maurice Shadbolt's novel An Ear of the Dragon, and who "contrived a prose to discover a country". The use of the word "contrived" is important because it suggests a mechanical aptitude but not an imaginative quality. The explanation for Frank's ability to do this contriving is given in the following sentence: "Perhaps it was just the Firth in his blood after all, with delayed-action fuse."[86] While the ability to write is described in such throw-away terms, the significance of the talent is suggested also. But the casualness is pretentious in itself.

Inevitably Frank Firth has the same kind of success in writing that Simon Gregg has, and it is this kind of measurable and visible success that is important.[87] The reader knows the technique of Firth's writing, the subject matter, the critical and public reaction. What the reader does not know is the creative process which inspired the novels. It is not unreasonable for a reader to expect that the artist might make some mention of the creative process even if he or she cannot explain or describe it. Frank Firth never mentions the artistic process and one presumes that both he and Shadbolt do not see it as important.

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[85] See "Space", page 41.
[86] An Ear of the Dragon, op.cit., page 31.
[87] Ibid., page 35.

The assumption that lies behind the refusal of Guthrie Wilson or Maurice Shadbolt to explain or explore the creative process is that readers will not be interested. They assume that their readers will only consider the amount of money and fame their writer characters earn to be significant. They could be right, but it is not unreasonable to ask that writers give their readers a little more than what they expect.

Fame and wealth come to the artists of the realistic novel in tangible and visible form. Fame and wealth come to the artists of subjective novels, but they are neither visible nor tangible. Success in the world of the subjective novel lies in recognising that the inner world is superior to the external world. The creative process is often used to indicate the extent to which a character has subscribed to the dictates of the inner world.

Robin Hyde's novel The Godwits Fly gives the most extensive portrayal of the development of an artist. There are other subjective novels about artists - Janet Frame's novel A State of Siege and Sylvia Ashton-Warner's novel Bell Call, for example, but these are about artists using a fully developed talent. Hyde's novel differs from theirs in that the reader sees Eliza Hannay coming to recognise her artistic abilities; he witnesses too the growth of those abilities, and sees the inevitable pain associated with the creative process.

Early in The Godwits Fly Eliza is distinguished as a character with a different vision of the world. Hyde uses the symbol of the Glory Hole to establish how different Eliza's interpretation of reality is.[88] Eliza's facility

[88] See Introduction, page 11.

with words is also suggested at the beginning of the novel when the reader is told that she is able to relate the stories about their childhood better than her sister Carly, even though Carly knows more facts about their childhood because she is older.[89]

As a child Eliza's imaginative development is quite painless. When halfway through the war she becomes a poet, Augusta Hannay, her mother, is enthusiastic although the poems are simple and banal. Eliza realises that the poetry gives her a strength which the acquisition of physical skills does not give her:

> Eliza was happy, not so much in the concrete results ... as in the mysterious sense of power and satisfaction that lay behind them; a day-dream power, which slips through the eyes of all children, sometimes through the brooding eyes of meadow-beasts as well, but which is only rarely held and formulated. [90]

Carly, her sister, recognises that Eliza has been given a strength that she, Carly, cannot compete with. "Carly took Eliza's poetry hard",[91] so hard in fact that the usually virtuous Carly tells lies and says "damn" twice in one sentence. Carly knows that she shares with Eliza that "daydream power" that all children have, but that Eliza's vision of the world has an added dimension that Carly's will never have. Carly's reaction is important because it alerts the reader to the fact that Eliza's poetry is more than just a consequence of her being a child.

Carly's reaction also shows how much hostility a private vision of the world can arouse among those who do not share that vision, or who having no private vision of their own are envious of the power given to the holder of such a

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[89]Hyde, op.cit., page 2.
[90]Ibid., page 71.
[91]Ibid., page 72.

vision. Eliza soon realises how vulnerable is the world from which the poetry comes. For long sections of the novel there is little or no mention of her writing. Hyde does tend to take up one theme after another and not to follow any of them through to a conclusion. In the case of Eliza's artistic development, however, the neglect of that development by the author is a true indication of what is happening to Eliza. She is having to learn to live with both her inner and her outer worlds, and for much of the time she ignores the inner world for the seeming comfort of the outer world. While she was a child it was easy to hold onto the two worlds together, but as she grows up this becomes increasingly difficult. Hyde suggests this difficulty by portraying Eliza in many situations which have nothing to do with her poetry.

When Eliza's baby is stillborn and "it" (as she calls her poetry) returns to her[92] the reader realises the extent to which she has buried this part of her life. The death of the child gives her the strength to explore her inner world again and to rediscover the peace she has found there. Yet this exploration makes living in the outer world more difficult for her. Eliza persists with writing poetry, as the reader knows from the chapter "Absalom, my Son" when John Hannay finds a book of her poetry in a shop.[93] Eliza shows no interest in this production; her concern is with keeping intact the world in which the poems were created. This attitude is in marked contrast to that of artists in realistic novels.

In Sylvia Ashton-Warner's novel Bell Call, Daniel, the novel's protagonist, buries his novel in the compost

[92]Ibid., page 207.
[93]Ibid., pages 223-226.

because he realises that the vision that has inspired the book is not a true vision of the world.[94] Daniel knows that the finished product would have met with approval, but to him that has become unimportant. What is important to him is to be true to the vision of the world that he has gained through his contact with Tarl Prackett. This is a vision that counts as insignificant material acquisitions and fame. Like all artists in subjective novels the artistic process is most important. For them publication and the possible fame or neglect that may result are unimportant. They must be true to their own private interpretation of the world first of all, and to the expression of that interpretation. Inevitably the expression of a private interpretation of the world is not going to bring tangible results in the form of wealth and fame. As I have shown with Eliza Hannay, this is of no significance to such an artist.

The portrayal of the artist in the subjective novel gives the reader an insight into a process with which he will be largely unfamiliar. It also upsets his preconceived notions about how the worth of any endeavour is assessed. When those who create artistic works show no interest in tangible and visible gains for that work there have to be other ways of judging them. In both respects the portrayal of the artist in the subjective novel can only be of value.

INSANITY

David Daiches has observed that the English realistic novel bases its view of "what was significant in human

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[94] Sylvia Ashton-Warner, Bell Call (Whitcombe & Tombs, Christchurch, 1969), page 228.

affairs on a generally agreed standard. Its plot patterns were constructed out of incidents and situations which were seen to matter in human affairs equally by writer and reader."[95] This agreed standard between writer and reader becomes much narrower in the realistic novel in New Zealand than it was in England. There is a lack of tolerance and compassion for deviance from that agreed standard. In the English realistic novel censure is usually reserved for those whose moral views and behaviour do not meet with the agreed standard. So George Eliot condemns the behaviour of Rosamund Lydgate and Mr Bulstrode in Middlemarch because they stray from the moral code she considers valid. Had Rosamund lived in New Zealand she would have been as likely to be condemned for being a woman and not making sufficient contribution to her family's material wealth, a facet of her character which was beyond her control. In the realistic novel in England characters who deviate from accepted standards are likely to be able to rectify their position if they learn new ways, and learning new ways is always seen as possible. In the New Zealand realistic novel the chance of deviance is much greater because the agreed standard of what is acceptable is much narrower. A character is often placed outside what is considered acceptable by facets of his or her character which he or she cannot help - for example, by being a woman, or a Maori, or being unable to contribute in one of the very few ways considered significant in New Zealand.

The desire to conform in the New Zealand realistic novel is therefore much stronger, and the pressure on characters not to deviate is much greater than it is in the

[95]Daiches, loc.cit.

English realistic novel. It is much easier to be considered insane in the realistic novel in New Zealand than it is in its English counterpart. (Insanity is used here not so much to denote a clinical condition as to signify a state of deviance from the accepted modes of behaviour and thought. It and its synonyms are used in both the subjective and realistic novels in New Zealand to describe those who do not conform to the narrow standards considered acceptable.)

To a large extent the realistic novel in New Zealand does not concern itself with those who do not fit into the patterns of behaviour and thought considered acceptable and significant. Inevitably when a character considered deviant is portrayed in the realistic novel he or she is treated unsympathetically, and there is no allowance made for his or her being able to move away from a position of being considered deviant.

In Maurice Gee's novel In My Father's Den, the protagonist, Paul Prior, looks back at the childhood he shared with his brother Andrew to try to discover why Andrew has murdered the schoolgirl Celia Inverarity. By the murder, Andrew has placed himself outside the modes of behaviour considered acceptable; that is a moral judgement which very few people would query. Like Paul, most readers of this novel would consider that Andrew is "out on the rim" whereas Paul is "in the world of the sane".[96] It is what pushes Andrew out into the "haunted territory" that displays the narrowness of Gee's view of what is considered acceptable. In the Prior family, Paul has been very influenced by his father (hence the novel's title), and Andrew by his mother. Mr Prior has had eclectic beliefs of a liberal nature, most

[96]Gee, op.cit., page 172.

of which would be considered acceptable in New Zealand society; their eclecticism ensures that the reader knows Mr Prior does not take them too seriously because serious thinking is a deviant behaviour. Mrs Prior, however, is wrapped in an evangelical religion which she passes onto Andrew. It is a strict Puritan kind of religious belief, and causes tension in Andrew, who wants the holy nature of his mother as well as all the worldly goods he sees around him. Paul sees Andrew's childhood as

> a kind of torture chamber where his human nature racked him and our mother stood Christlike, with blessing and forgiveness, if only he could reach her ...
>
> A diagram of his universe might be made of two overlapping circles, the perimeter of each enclosing the circle of the other. In one circle the things of the spirit: a stern God, a merciful Christ, and Mother, combining these attributes (a kind of Holy Ghost). In the other: bank account, house, car ... [97]

There is no stage in this account of Andrew's movement into what is seen as insanity that the reader feels such a movement could have been prevented. In many English realistic novels, however, the reader knows if a character had only behaved or thought differently he or she would have been saved. Very few deviant characters in English realistic novels are considered insane. The reader of In My Father's Den knows that if Andrew had not subscribed to his mother's religious views, which were so incompatible with all the things he should want, he would have been "sane". But such an action was beyond Andrew's control. It is the narrowness of New Zealand society which also drives Andrew to violence. In a society which placed less emphasis on the acquisition of worldly goods, Andrew would not have felt the sort of tension he feels between his religious views and what

[97] Ibid., pages 164-165.

is expected of him in the society in which he lives. What Gee's novel shows - though neither Gee nor Paul Prior realises this - is how easy it is to be labelled insane in New Zealand, and how easy it is to be led into activities which do denote insanity. The narrowness of society allows so little deviance that when deviant behaviour does occur it must be more violent than it would be in a more tolerant and eclectic society.

The kind of conformity that is so important in the realistic novel is irrelevant in the subjective novel, which is interested in an individual consciousness rather than in groups of people. Many authors of subjective novels do acknowledge, however, that the vision of the world they convey in their novels will be considered insane by those for whom they are writing. Subjective novels take no cognizance of agreed standards of behaviour or thought. What they consider important is the consciousness of the individual character in their novel. The nature of the portrayal makes it almost inevitable that the behaviour and perceptions of characters in the subjective novel will be of a kind that is considered unacceptable in the society in which they live.

The fullest exploration of a character considered insane by those around her because of her different interpretation of the world occurs in Janet Frame's novel Faces in the Water. In this novel the reader is given a full account of the journey from the real world to the subjective world. Frame has no illusions about the dangers involved in such a journey, yet the dangers are not of Istina Mavet's making, but are created by the society in which she lives.

Because Istina is committed three times to mental

hospitals she is able to convey to the reader three times what the journey between the real and the subjective world entails. The first time she describes the events leading up to her committal she uses the metaphor of a journey. Though her passage from one world to the other is dangerous, the dangers are worth facing because the world she is leaving is one of poverty. What happens to Istina is beyond her control, but not in the same way that Andrew Prior's movement from sanity out onto the rim of insanity is beyond his control. Istina remains where she is, living according to standards she considers acceptable and finding that those around her do not agree with her standards of thought and behaviour:

> a great gap opened in the ice floe between myself and the other people whom I watched, with their world, drifting away through the violet-coloured sea ...

The world "the other people" live in is dangerous, too, for they swim with "hammerhead sharks ... seals and the polar bears". It is a world where the worst danger is that of poverty, and for that reason Istina decides (and here her journey ceases to be passive) to stay on her ice floe, "minding the terrible traffic across the lonely polar desert".[98] The difference between Istina and those she leaves behind is that she is prepared to "burgle ... the crammed house of feeling",[99] while other people want to stay in a safe and sterile world for ever. The safeness and sterility of it is emphasised by Istina's references to the Red Cross,[100] using it as a metaphor for the barrenness of the real world.

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[98] Faces in the Water, op.cit., pages 10-12.
[99] Ibid., page 16.
[100] Ibid., pages 9-10.

The dangers of the world that Istina chooses to live in and which leads to her committal to mental hospitals (thus designating her officially as insane) are emphasised the second and third times she leaves the world of safety for a world which she terms as "the glass beads of fantasy".[101] The second time she realises that the real world is drifting away from her she feels that she "was burgled of body and hung in the sky like a woman of straw".[102] By casting her out because her vision of the world is different from theirs, the society in which she is trying once again to live has emptied her of her identity. The third time she sees the world drifting away from her and knows she must go back into the mental hospital she feels empty also. "'Oh God, why am I empty?'" she cries to herself alone in her bed.[103] The outer public world she is trying to inhabit is becoming more dangerous to her. Her room and her books are musty and decaying. In the sky, hawks mingle with other birds "biding their time".[104] Humanity is empty, as we see from her phrase "intimations of humanity - ice-cream cartons and orange peel". Her father groans and her mother "sat bailing blood from her enormous shoes".[105]

Though the world Istina keeps trying to come back to is dangerous, there is also little safety in the mental hospitals where she ends her journeys across the polar desert. Frame's criticism of the treatment of insanity is allowed full play. The staff in the mental hospitals are devoted to preparing the inmates for a return to the outside world (in both a physical and an imaginative sense) so they must strip

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[101]Ibid., page 11.
[102]Ibid., page 65.
[103]Ibid., page 130.
[104]Ibid., page 129.
[105]Ibid., page 131.

them of their "glass beads of fantasy", and thus make them empty. If they cannot do this, they must control them, usually by fear. The vision of the world that Istina has is not safe anywhere, least of all in a mental hospital where the aim is to return her to the world of safety, sterility and poverty.

Faces in the Water operates on two levels. It is an exploration of the conditions which lead to committal to a mental institution, and it is a condemnation of the forces operating in society which condemn so many people to the state of insanity and thus to the barbaric physical and mental conditions of mental hospitals. In In My Father's Den the reader, writer and Paul Prior believe that, provided they have not had the sort of childhood Andrew Prior has had, they will not end up "out on the rim" of the world as Andrew does. For Frame, however, all of us are capable of holding visions of the world which are unacceptable to those around us, and therefore we are all vulnerable and open to being labelled as insane and being committed to an institution as Istina is. Many people, however, refuse to recognise their private and inner world, and thus keep themselves safe, but poor. To explain how Istina's fate could be common to all of us, Frame uses the symbol of the face in the water, equating that face with the private interpretation of the world everyone has. When people avoid recognising the face in the water it is like avoiding an "urgent responsibility". We all, writes Frame, "see the faces in the water. We smother our memory of them, even our belief in their reality, and become calm people of the world; or we can neither forget nor help them. Sometimes by a trick of circumstance or a hostile neighbourhood of light we

see our own face."[106]

The idea is conveyed in Faces in the Water that those society considers insane are more likely to be saner than those considered sane. Even if they are not, the possibility is there for any one of us to be considered insane. The authors of subjective novels recognise, as Frame does here, that their characters are more than likely to be labelled insane even if the author does not describe them thus. This realisation makes them angry and defensive, and leads them to pungent criticism of the narrow and intolerant society which allows so little deviance from its standards. The case they make is persuasive, and is made more persuasive when one looks at the unsympathetic treatment meted out to those who are different in the realistic novel.

The case has now been made. What we can hope for is for a series of novels which convey a private interpretation of the world without acknowledging that it might be considered insane. We cannot hope for this from the realistic novel, but there are signs that we might have it from the subjective novel. It is the development of the subjective novel which is the concern of the rest of the thesis, now there has been established in this section the ways in which the realistic and subjective novels differ, and proof that the vision of the world of the subjective novel is richer and more diverse than that in the realistic novel.

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[106]Ibid., page 150.

SECTION II

THE WORLD OF THE SUBJECTIVE NOVEL

The remainder of this thesis concentrates on the world of the New Zealand subjective novel. As I have suggested in the Introduction the subjective novel is the province of those who see their interpretation of the world rendered as insignificant in the realistic novel. There are many experiences which are considered insignificant in the realistic novel, which largely confines itself to the experiences of the world known by young, healthy, European men. So far, however, it is women, Maoris and a few men who have given us their private interpretation of the reality of the New Zealand experience. Those who use the mode of the subjective novel see themselves and are seen by others as being people who because of their race or sex, physical or mental ability do not make any acceptable or significant contribution to the society in which they live. Such people, living as they do on the periphery of society, interpret the world in ways which are rather different from the interpretations of those who are considered to make an acceptable and significant contribution. These private interpretations of the world only increase the feeling of exclusion which most characters in the subjective novels experience.

Two areas of the subjective novel are examined here - first, the ways in which each novelist explores the status of his or her characters as people who are excluded from what is seen as the mainstream of society; and second, the inner and private worlds which their characters create. In some

novels, especially those written in the last ten years, there is no overt description of the ways in which the characters see themselves as living an important part of their lives outside the society of which they are ostensibly a part. In such cases the onus is on the reader to be aware of the extent to which the vision being described in a particular novel is an inner and private vision and is not one that is shared by others. In novels such as those by Robin Hyde the link between the feeling of exclusion and the creation of an inner world is made explicit. In later novels such as those by Joy Cowley the connection between one's status in the outside world and the creation of an inner world is not made so explicit.

The largest part of this section is devoted to writing by women because hitherto they have made the most extensive contribution to the development of the subjective novel. The contribution made by Maori writers is small but as cohesive as that made by women. The male writers are a more disparate group, and their private visions are more varied, but the extent of writing in this mode by men is sufficient in quality and quantity to warrant examination.

PART I : THE FEMALE VISION

A : INTRODUCTION

Though most of the writing in the subjective mode is by women, not all writing by women in New Zealand is in this tradition. What distinguishes writing by women in the realistic tradition from writing by men in that tradition is the concern women writers have with the place their women characters occupy in society and the roles they are expected to play. These women feel conscious of themselves as women living in a male-dominated and male-created world. The weak and insecure position they see themselves to be in is exemplified by the very conscious inclusions in their novels of arguments about what might be broadly labelled "women's rights". Like some of the subjective novelists, these female realistic novelists react to their feelings of insecurity by becoming aggressive about the position they occupy.

The three novelists who exemplify this position most clearly are Edith Searle Grossman, Jane Mander and Jean Devanny. It is important to note that all three wrote most of their fiction before 1930. With the publication of Wednesday's Children in 1937 and The Godwits Fly in 1938 Robin Hyde made clear that there were other fictional modes open to those who wished to interpret experiences not considered significant in the realistic novel. The importance of Hyde's writing in this and other ways is examined in the next chapter.

There is very little writing in New Zealand fiction

which examines the roles that men occupy in New Zealand society. That is to be expected in a society which seems to offer unlimited scope and an unlimited number of roles to men. Such a judgement is superficial, of course, as any reader of either Frank Sargeson's novel I Saw in My Dream or Michael Henderson's The Log of a Superfluous Son will know. It is the kind of judgement one might expect in a society and in a fiction that has largely interested itself in the public and external lives of its constituents. Men have never been as overtly oppressed as women have in New Zealand, and this explains why there are no masculine equivalents of Mander, Devanny or Grossman.

These three novelists are interested in the physical inequities which face their women characters: their lack of education, their inability to own property, their lack of sexual freedom which leads to their being regarded by their husbands as a piece of property, and the lack of recognition of the importance of their roles as mothers and wives. The solutions they suggest are ones suitable to such inequalities: changes in laws and changes in governments. History has shown that changes in laws and governments make little long-term differences to inequalities such as those under which women suffer. What is needed is a change of heart, but only Grossman in her last novel The Heart of the Bush is prepared to recognise this. As I have shown in the previous section of this thesis, the form of the realistic novel is ill-equipped to deal with changes of heart, so these women are badly served by the novel form they have chosen.

Most of the novels by these three women prove how ineffective changes in laws and governments will be to change the hearts and minds of people. Edith Searle Grossman's

two novels about Hermione Carlisle - In Revolt and Hermione: A Knight of the Holy Ghost[1] - advocate a change in the property and divorce laws as a remedy for the situation that Hermione finds herself in. Hermione marries a farmer who becomes a drunkard and beats her. She leaves him after he kills her son. She is taken in by a Dr Earle, who adopts her as his protégée. Hermione's intelligence and her recognition of the inequalities facing women lead her into the women's movement in America. When she returns to Australia she sets up a house for women which she calls her "Sisterhood". Essentially her work is with what we would now call "battered wives" - a group that Hermione herself has belonged to. There is a philosophy behind all this charitable work, and it is expressed in the following way: Hermione sees her task as being

> To set women free from all but natural disabilities, and to do away with a dominion that was set up in a bygone savage age. And, most of all, I would raise the idea of marriage. The union is marriage, and the union is the source of the new race ... [2]

This is good revolutionary stuff, but Hermione really does nothing towards putting it into practice. She is merely applying a band-aid, so to speak, to those who have suffered because her philosophy is not shared by the society in which she lives. How unsuccessful she has been in changing the hearts and minds of people becomes apparent when her husband tries to get her to come back to him. She refuses and petitions for a divorce. It is suggested during the case that she has been the mistress of Dr Earle, and later of his

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[1] Edith Searle Grossman, In Revolt (Eden, Remington & Co., London, 1893); Hermione: A Knight of the Holy Ghost (Watts & Co., London, 1908).
[2] Hermione, op.cit., page 181.

son Leonard. Because of this Hermione loses the case, and her husband is allowed to reclaim her as a piece of property that has been lost might be reclaimed. The only escape for Hermione is suicide. It has taken two long books and much argument about women's rights to arrive at this position - a position in which Hermione was when she first left Bradley Carlisle. She has changed the heart of no-one, and she has not changed any laws, which was what she did hope to do. It is hard to know in what light Grossman regarded the suicide, but certainly the reader feels that all Hermione's efforts have been in vain.

The same feeling of frustration occurs when one reads Jean Devanny's novels, in particular The Butcher Shop and Dawn Beloved. Both these novels concern themselves with the inequities of the marital state for women, particularly for intelligent women. In marriage women are property, and what is worse for intelligent women such as Margaret Messenger and Dawn Devoy is that they are the property of men who do not appreciate their desire for both physical and intellectual stimulation. The message in The Butcher Shop is for sexual freedom. Margaret Messenger is bored by her husband:

> The ardour of her love had not out-lasted the first few months of her wedded life, but Margaret had not considered this anything extraordinary ... It must be a woman's way and a man's way, she thought ... [3]

Into this situation comes the physically very desirable new manager on the farm, Glengarry. In one of the first pieces of purple prose in New Zealand fiction, their attraction for each other is described:

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[3] Jean Devanny, The Butcher Shop (Duckworth, London, 1926), page 113.

> He came straight to her. His eyes were like coals of fire in his head ... She was responding to his madness ... They were prey to elemental instincts, sharing with the habitant of the lair and the dweller in the temple the throb of creation's invincible urge. [4]

The affair between Margaret and Glengarry continues for a month before Margaret is confronted by her husband. She is angry because she believes herself to be a free person, able to involve herself with any other person in any way she sees fit. When her husband and Glengarry challenge this view she tells them:

> You think that my married state gives my husband and my children the power of life and death over me. What am I ... A machine ... a breeding animal denied even the right to choose my own mate? [5]

The theoretical solution to such an untenable position is voiced by the socialist cousin of Barry Messenger, who comes to stay with them. He looks forward to a world where there exists

> a class of emancipated women free in body and mind, economically independent, choosing their own mates, marching onward to that goal which the finite mind of man cannot even now perceive. [6]

It is indicative of Devanny's belief in man-made institutions that she should give this prophecy to a man, rather than to her intelligent, well-read and articulate heroine. But such a world does not exist; it did not exist in 1926 when this novel was published and it does not exist now. No moves are made in this novel to bring such a world about. No-one in the novel is converted to another way of thinking about the world which allows women to suffer the sorts of inequalities that Margaret Messenger is aware of. No-one in this novel even attempts to change laws or governments,

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[4] Ibid., page 126.
[5] Ibid., page 152.
[6] Ibid., page 284.

though the inclusion of the socialist to speak the prophecy suggests that Devanny believed that socialism would make for a better world for women. Like Grossman, Devanny sees that minds and hearts need to be changed but as a novelist she is incapable of describing how such a process occurs, so that no change is made in her characters' way of thinking or in their physical situation. Like Grossman, she can only end this dreadful predicament by killing off people. At the end of the novel, Margaret Messenger slits Glengarry's throat after she has driven her husband to suicide by confessing her adultery.

Devanny's novel Dawn Beloved follows much the same pattern. An intelligent young woman marries a man to whom she is attracted physically but who is her inferior intellectually. Like Margaret, Dawn Devoy is soon disillusioned about the sexual relationship in her marriage, and comes to hate her husband, who is even more unsympathetic towards her than Barry Messenger is towards Margaret. Dawn joins a group discussing socialism, and comes to believe that as a political belief it offers emancipation for women from the drudgery of being a housewife and mother. Dawn's disillusionment with marriage and her belief that being married is her burden leads her to deny her husband sexually. He turns to another woman and both of them are killed by one of her ex-lovers. Dawn goes away to Wellington to an older man who has been her intellectual mentor, but who now reveals his true intentions and becomes her lover.

> She seldom gave herself to thought and as the habit of mental exercise fell away from her the brutal, primitive woman gained power. [7]

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[7]Jean Devanny, Dawn Beloved (Duckworth, London, 1928), page 350.

Nothing is achieved in this novel either, and the woman ends in a worse predicament than she had begun. By providing such endings to their novels neither Grossman nor Devanny seems aware that they are negating all the prophecy and talk about a new order for women. None of the doctrines or the actions of these novels provides a handbook for any reader who may want to change the lot of women. To the unsympathetic reader these novels are yet more proof that women are better kept in an inferior position.

Jane Mander's novels follow the same formula. At the end of The Story of a New Zealand River Alice Roland has merely exchanged one domineering man for another. She has bequeathed her surplus money to a home for unmarried women, which is like Hermione's work with battered wives - a band-aid to patch up one of the disabilities women suffer without eradicating the cause of it. Most indicative of Mander's position, however, is her comment about Asia's future. All through the novel Asia is presented as being a sort of "New Woman" with thoughts which are much more progressive than her mother's. She goes off to work for her living, she has suffered the advances of all and sundry in her father's sawmill and emerged unscathed, she smokes, and she holds views about life that are considered by Mander to be acceptable ones. Her future, however, is not to be much different from that of her mother. Alice Roland marries another man through whom she can live her life. Asia goes to live with Alan Ross, a married man who is unlikely to obtain a divorce, and it is through him she will live her life. She sees her part in the work of the Labour Party of New South Wales as being "through him".[8] She is not going

[8]Jane Mander, The Story of a New Zealand River (1920; rpt. Whitcombe & Tombs Ltd., Christchurch, 1973), page 235.

to work with him as an equal, but she will occupy a position much the same as the one her mother has occupied in relation to men - she will live her life vicariously, through a man. All Mander's discussion about equal education for women, equal job opportunities and the possibility of a new political order mean nothing in the light of this seemingly innocuous statement.

The only optimistic novel of any written by these three novelists is Edith Searle Grossman's aptly titled The Heart of the Bush. In this novel Grossman moves away from politics, law and political and social movements, and concerns herself with two individuals. She places Adelaide Borlase and Dennis McDiarmid in the bush away as far as is possible from external influences and examines how they come to a mode of living which will allow each to develop in relation to the other. Both have to compromise the expectations they have of the other. Dennis believes that he serves Adelaide best by leaving her for long periods of time in order that he might earn a lot of money and so give her all the things he thinks she wants.[9] He discovers that she is not interested in acquiring goods, but that she does very much want his company.[10] So the man in this novel becomes something rather unusual in New Zealand. He is a husband and later a father, but he is not to a very great extent a breadwinner. Much of Dennis's time is spent with Adelaide, and not on making money. Adelaide suffers in the same way in that she has certain expectations about how she thinks Dennis would like her to behave, which do not happen to be correct.[11] In the end Adelaide's illness forces her to

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[9]Edith Searle Grossman, The Heart of the Bush (Sand & Company, London, 1910), page 258.
[10]Ibid., page 326.
[11]Ibid., page 258.

speak to Dennis and so they work out a compromise which makes them both happy.[12] A change of heart is achieved. The novel is romantic and over-written, but it is the only one before those of Hyde which suggests that the solution to the inequalities suffered by both men and women will come about more easily by creating a new vision of the world, than by writing new laws or altering the political tenor of a government.

It took nearly thirty years for the sentiments of The Heart of the Bush to be taken up and realised by Robin Hyde. Hyde's work owes little to Grossman, but we should not forget that Grossman did acknowledge in this novel that the situation in which women found themselves would be better rectified by changing hearts rather than laws and governments. She saw the need for a different interpretation of reality, and she knew that the creation of an inner, private vision of the world - such as Adelaide and Dennis are seen to create in the bush - would provide a radical alternative to the external and public world in which women suffered. She was not able to describe adequately what that inner, private world would be like, but she did at least recognise it as a world where women and men would be free as they could never be in the outer world.

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[12] Ibid., pages 331-334.

B : ROBIN HYDE

Robin Hyde is the first novelist in New Zealand to explore the possibilities of the subjective novel. The Godwits Fly and Wednesday's Children represent the first attempts to portray the inner world of fantasy and imagination which is the province of the subjective novelist.

Robin Hyde wrote, as Winston Rhodes has observed, "with a divided mind. The reporter and the poet in her were always at war".[1] Her fiction demonstrates the way in which her allegiances were divided. Three of her novels - Passport to Hell and Nor the Years Condemn and Check to Your King - are documentary-type novels using the style of the realistic novel. What links them to her other two novels which reflect the poet in her - The Godwits Fly and Wednesday's Children - is what J.C. Reid has called her "deep personal sympathy for the off-beat character".[2]

The inner world of the imagination and the emotions is necessary to the protagonists of Wednesday's Children and The Godwits Fly because they are people who have been "edged off the earth".[3] Their status as people living on the limits of society occurs because they are women. Hyde makes explicit, particularly in The Godwits Fly, the nature of women's exclusion from what are considered the important parts of the society they live in. Her examination of the status of women links her to the three novelists whose work was

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[1] H. Winston Rhodes, "Robin Hyde, Novelist" in New Zealand Libraries, October 1947, page 181.
[2] J.C. Reid, "New Zealand Literature" in The Literatures of Australia and New Zealand by G.A. Wilkes and J.C. Reid (The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1970), page 194.
[3] Robin Hyde, Wednesday's Children (Hurst & Blackett Ltd., London, n.d., [1937]), page 274.

examined earlier, but her solution for the predicament she sees women in is rather different from the solutions offered by Jane Mander, Jean Devanny and Edith Searle Grossman.

Her solution is for her characters to create an inner world for themselves, one which is impervious to the discriminations of the outer world, and one in which their experiences of the world can be seen as valuable.

Hyde is torn between the inner and the outer worlds, and never finds a way of combining the two. Unlike Janet Frame she cannot give all her allegiance to one of these worlds. Nor does she find a way, as Sylvia Ashton-Warner later did, of combining "this" world with "that" world so that the necessity of each world to the other was made apparent. The war within herself between what Rhodes calls "the reporter" and "the poet" causes the most obvious weaknesses of her novels.

In examining Hyde's two subjective novels - Wednesday's Children and The Godwits Fly - I have used the division that she creates between the outer and the inner world. I discuss first her portrayal of her two women characters, Eliza Hannay and Wednesday Gilfillan, as people living on the edge of the earth. In the second part of this chapter I look at the inner world these two women retreat to because of their status in the outer world.

ROBIN HYDE'S WOMEN

> How sad it is to be a woman,
> Nothing on earth is held so cheap. [4]

In this quotation which Eliza Hannay remembers while

[4] Robin Hyde, The Godwits Fly (1938; rpt. Auckland University Press/Oxford University Press, Auckland, 1974), page 170.

lying in hospital is summed up all that Hyde had to say about the condition of women. Though she may have had compassion for men, they are never as oppressed as women are. It is in The Godwits Fly that the oppression is made most obvious, and many of the arguments that Hyde advances are similar to those advanced by Grossman, Mander and Devanny. Her remedy, as I have suggested and as I shall show later, differs radically from theirs.

Along with the account of Eliza Hannay's poetic development in The Godwits Fly goes an account of Eliza's development into conventional womanhood. This latter development prevents Eliza's poetic growth, as is shown in the central part of the novel. From Chapters Ten to Twenty no mention is made of Eliza's poetry. Much attention is paid, however, to Eliza's attempts to get herself a man. Her mother considers this a necessity,[5] even though her own marriage is a case history of how unsatisfactory marriage can be. Of the Hannays' marriage Hyde writes:

> Two people, solitaries, dreamers, winning out of their first environment, find a dog-chain twisting their ankles together. Still they fight for their escape; one lonely, shy, suffering under a sense of social injustice, for escape into the steaming companionship, the labouring but powerful flanks of mankind: the other fights for what blood and tradition have taught her, fields of bluebells ringing all on the one exquisitely lengthened note, courage, craftmanship, the order which for her has existed only in a dream, so that she cannot know if its grey stone pile be crumbling today. They are young when it begins; their words, like their veins, are hot and full of passion. They share a double bed, and have children. One day an ageing man looks around, and finds himself wrestling with an ageing woman, her face seamed with tears. [6]

Hyde's account of the limited happiness available in marriage is less dogmatic than the accounts of the novelists who

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[5]Ibid., page 135.
[6]Ibid., page 47.

dealt with this topic before her. Unlike them, she realises that marriage places restrictions on men as well as on women. Despite that, it is Eliza in whom she is interested, and it is for Eliza that she sees marriage to be especially restricting.

Eliza's first real love affair is with Timothy Cardew, an aspiring poet whom her father brings home. Timothy and Eliza share intellectual interests, but Eliza is also sexually attracted to Timothy. Unfortunately for Eliza, however, Timothy, who is quite prepared to make love to most women he finds attractive, has decided to keep Eliza "white, for an ideal".[7] Hyde never makes explicit in the way that Devanny does how unfair it is to women that a double standard operates in sexual relations between men and women. Eliza cannot propose to Timothy that they make love. In their relationship Timothy calls the tune, even though Eliza is as intelligent as he is and they both know she is. When Timothy broaches the possibility of a trip to London, Eliza asks if she can come too. The only role in which Timothy can see her accompanying him is as his mistress.[8] At this point Eliza realises that she has no control over the situation. Though Timothy promises to take her to England, both Eliza and the reader know that he will not. He feels no responsibility towards her, even though he recognises the power he has over her. Because she is a woman, Eliza is powerless.

From this point on, Eliza proceeds to have less and less control over her own life. When Timothy leaves for England, she has an affair with Jim Braithwaite, whom she

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[7]Ibid., page 123.
[8]Ibid., page 163.

likes, but for whom she does not feel the passion she felt for Timothy. She becomes pregnant, and goes to Sydney to have the baby. The time in Sydney shows her at the mercy of unscrupulous landladies making the most of her situation. It is only when the child is born dead that Eliza regains some power - an old power, that of her poetry.[9] In the remainder of the novel Eliza tries to reconstruct her world, a world in which her identity as a poet will be more important than her identity as a woman. Without doubt the fact of Eliza's womanhood has made her weak. It has cast her out of many opportunities, and has made it difficult for her to pursue the writing which should have been important to her.

The difference between Hyde's attitude to the very real inequalities she sees women facing, and the attitude taken towards the same situation by novelists like Grossman, Mander and Devanny, is that Hyde blames no group of people, no institutions, and no set of laws for these inequities. As the quotation above about the Hannays' marriage indicates, she has as much compassion for men as she does for women in this position. That she does not blame men for the condition of women is suggested by the following reflection:

> Men, you have sentinelled your doors with them. It is a false judgement, the judgement you passed on them, and false the sentence of pain, and the base metal with which they were paid for living. ... They did not remember to blame or to condemn you; if they spoke of you at all, it was quietly, with the old words of love. [10]

Just as the blame does not lie with men, nor does the remedy. This is made explicit in the description of the clay woman that Timothy Cardew models:

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[9] This aspect of The Godwits Fly has been discussed in Section I, pages 63-64, 68-70.

[10] Hyde, op.cit., page 170.

> He wanted her to be strong in throat and chin, an answer to his brother's strength. But when he had got her so far, the tiny arms would take no attitude but that of beseeching. All the women's faces that had looked up at him demanded her face; not one of them but asked ... He had made her strong, given her good limbs and shoulders and forehead but only to lose. 'God went wrong somewhere', he said, and dropped his clay woman into the muddied pool beneath the gorse-bushes. [11]

Timothy cannot do anything about the condition of women; women must make themselves strong. How they make themselves strong is indicated by Eliza's turning to her poetry after the death of her child; in the inner world women have a strength denied them in the outer world, and it is a strength that cannot be touched by the outer world.

Wednesday Gilfillan in Wednesday's Children creates a dream world for much the same reasons that Eliza turns to the world of her poetry. When Wednesday writes a letter to Mr Bellister at the end of the novel explaining why she has made up the story about her four lovers and her five children and the life they have led on the island, she explains the reason for her dream in the following way - she remembers Shakespeare's "To thine own self be true" and states:

> And then when it all went so badly - living where I wasn't wanted, and looking such an insignificant plain kitchen pot, and dropping stitches in knitted bedsocks no sane person would have worn, anyway, I began to wonder, 'Which self? Which self? True to which self?' [12]

So she creates an imaginary self, one over which she has control as she has no control in the real world. It is Uncle Elihu, senile and bedridden, banished to the attic by the Gilfillan family as of no use, who reflects on the social reasons which would have led Wednesday into her extraordinary behaviour (Uncle Elihu does not know it is all a dream, but

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[11] Ibid., page 145.
[12] Wednesday's Children, op.cit., page 273.

his observations are applicable also to Wednesday's creation of the dream):

> He had looked back, with wise and faded eyes, upon features of social existence which had always depressed him ... limitations and one-sidedness in matrimonial arrangements, the fetish of illegitimacy, the dual standard of morality, the cheerful acceptance of prostitution and its near-respectable little sisters. [13]

Only those who are outcasts as Wednesday is recognise her beauty and know the strength she gains from her private vision of the world. Uncle Elihu always shows his support for what she is doing. A drunk in the street sees her as beautiful, whereas a clerk in the newspaper office has his eyes sealed and sees "no more than a lady who wore demodée sealskins, and tendered him a pink slip of paper together with the correct sum".[14] The person who has the most understanding and sympathy for her is the Englishman, Mr Bellister: "Like most Englishmen, Mr Bellister had a secret passion for the small, the lonesome, the pathetic."[15]

Hyde makes very clear her belief that the creation of a private vision of the world by both Wednesday and Eliza is the result of their being cut off from acceptable society because they are women. I want now to examine the private worlds that they both create.

THE INNER WORLDS OF ELIZA HANNAY AND WEDNESDAY GILFILLAN

Even if we did not have Gloria Rawlinson's comment that Wednesday's Children and The Godwits Fly were written at

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[13] Ibid., page 225.
[14] Ibid., page 17.
[15] Ibid., page 101. This understanding of Bellister's on account of his nationality is a particular quirk of Hyde's. Other subjective novelists are as adamant as she is about the limited vision of most New Zealanders, but they are less likely to attribute a superior vision to someone because of his or her nationality.

the same time, readers of the two novels would know that they are the two halves of one whole.[16] In The Godwits Fly the reader has a very full account of why and how women are excluded from the important aspects of the society in which they live, and he is shown also what Hyde considers to be a valid response to this condition. The portrayal of Eliza the poet is limited, and the reader needs Wednesday's Children to provide him with a complete picture of the inner and private world which Hyde considered so valuable and so authentic a response to the exclusion women suffer.

The private and inner world that Eliza creates because of her exclusion from the outer, public world - an exclusion that is well documented in The Godwits Fly - is the world that finds expression in her poetry. The reader knows very little about this poetry. He knows that as a child Eliza has shown some facility with words, and that that facility has given her power. He realises when that power returns to her after the death of her child that the power has in fact been lost to Eliza for some time. Once the power of the poetry returns to Eliza the reader still knows very little about how it is constituted. The only substantial reference to it after the death of the baby is in the chapter "Absalom, my Son", where John Hannay finds a book of Eliza's poetry in a bookshop. At the end of The Godwits Fly the reader still knows very little about Eliza's inner world, and this is why Wednesday's Children fills an obvious gap. When one looks at other private interpretations of reality in New Zealand fiction one realises that Eliza's inner world has much in common with other inner worlds, but that is to make hers richer than it is presented to the reader in the

[16] Introduction to The Godwits Fly, op.cit., p.xv.

novel. Like other inner worlds, Eliza's gains public utterance through art; she finds strength in death; she has an affinity with other outcasts, particularly the old men at the end of the novel;[17] and she is committed to a mental institution because she is considered insane.[18] None of these aspects of Eliza's inner world receives very full treatment, and it is for this reason that the vision of the world of Wednesday Gilfillan is so important.

The fact that Wednesday's vision of the world is not based in external, physical reality is only revealed to the reader at the end of the novel in the letter that she writes to Mr Bellister. The inclusion of the letter reveals the main weakness of Wednesday's Children. Hyde was unable to either invent or adapt for her own use a fictional form which would adequately convey to the reader that the contents of the novel were a dream. In The Godwits Fly as I have indicated[19] she attempted to change the fictional form to deal with the vision of the world she wished to convey but she was only partly successful. In I Saw in My Dream Frank Sargeson indicates the "dream" parts of the narrative by using italics. In the italicised passages the narrative is no longer directed by the omniscient narrator but by the consciousness of Henry/Dave, as it is in all subjective novels. Such a device could not be used by Hyde simply because her account of Wednesday's dream takes up thirteen of the fourteen chapters of the novel.

Wednesday's letter is an explanation of what motivated her actions which have been described in the body of the novel. It is written to Mr Bellister, an Englishman who

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[17] The Godwits Fly, op.cit., page 232.
[18] Ibid., page 216.
[19] Section I, pages 24-25.

has come to inspect the Gilfillan family because his ward wants to marry their daughter. Throughout the novel he has been the reader's touchstone. More than anyone else, except perhaps Uncle Elihu, who is unable to do much about his understanding, Mr Bellister sympathises with Wednesday. He does not understand her, he does not know what she is doing, but he does not judge her. The reader knows only what he knows, and the reader trusts Mr Bellister's interpretation of the events of the novel. So when Wednesday has finally to confess what she has been doing, and she makes that confession to Mr Bellister, the reader believes what is happening. This is important, because the letter makes everything else in the novel unbelievable. In this situation the reader has to have some character in the novel he can trust. He cannot trust the other members of Wednesday's family, but he can trust Mr Bellister.

As Wednesday explains in her letter, the supremacy of her dream world over her physical world began when she won £25,000 in a lottery. She gave the money to a children's home, because "by the time I had won independence, it was too late for the money to be of personal use to me. I let myself be edged off the earth - by shyness, by clumsiness, by mooning in corners".[20] She meets a fortune-teller who tells her about her beautiful children. At this stage Wednesday has so little to lose from the "real" world that she invents her five children - Attica, Dorset, Naples and the twins Londonderry and Limerick, all of whom have different fathers, and establishes them on an island which she has rented in the Hauraki Gulf. The island is real; the children and their fathers are not. All the time, however,

[20] Wednesday's Children, op.cit., page 274.

Wednesday brings her dream world into contact with the real world - she announces the births in the newspaper, she kidnaps a boy from the Vienna Boys' Choir and takes him to the island, and finally she is prosecuted for telling fortunes. (She has taken over the fortune-telling business of Madame Mystera, who originally told her about her children.)

These events do lead to Wednesday's decision to abandon her dream world, but a more important factor in her decision is that Mr Bellister loves her and she loves him. She has achieved in this what she wanted all along - to be loved and understood, so she can afford now to give up the dream of the lovers and the children who had provided her with the imaginary communion with people which she had not had in the "real" world. As well, she knows that the dream has been made real by Mr Bellister's acceptance of it. Wednesday disappears physically, but she still exists in the memory of Bellister, and presumably to a certain extent in Uncle Elihu's memory too.[21]

In many respects Wednesday's private interpretation of the world follows the pattern I described in Section I. She chooses an island as a small physical space in which to locate her dream world. The island has a physical existence, and certain aspects of Wednesday's life do also - she lives there, though exactly where is debatable.[22] The island is ideal as a symbol of Wednesday's private and inner world. It is a small physical space, isolated from the rest of the world by an expanse of water. It is physically cut

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[21] Ibid. Wednesday's letter to Mr Bellister covers pages 273-277.

[22] On page 60 of the novel the house is described as "a one-storey house at the back, two-storey at the front"; on page 280 it is described as "a wooden shack, little more than a shed".

off from the world in the way that Wednesday's interpretation of that world is isolated from it. Islands are particularly appropriate places for grounding imaginary worlds in New Zealand novels. Janet Frame realised this when she put Malfred Signal on the island of Karemoana in A State of Siege. In all of Frame's novels set in New Zealand the characters are very conscious of the sea, and of looking out to it. In Sylvia Ashton-Warner's two novels, Spinster and Incense to Idols, in particular the protagonists are conscious of the extent to which the sea isolates them from the rest of the world. Only island dwellers can know the power of the sea - its power to isolate and its power to bring unknown forces which may threaten life on the island. As Allen Curnow writes: "Always to islanders danger/Is what comes over the sea."[23] Certainly Wednesday's island is threatened by the sea which surrounds it. "'Maybe people mustn't come to that island, or they'll hurt it, and what's on it.'" one of its inhabitants tells a visitor.[24] The definable limits of the island make it easy to suggest how it can be invaded by powers dangerous to it.

The island in its small size is appropriate too for an account of a life which has its existence only inside the head of Wednesday Gilfillan. The size of that world is indicated in the poem at the end of the novel - "The Poem for the Island":

> That was so slight a theme -
> Windbells, no more,
> Foam-bells, bells of the paraha, lipping,
> An island shore,
> Still as a dream within a dream,
> And the ebb tide backward slipping. [25]

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[23] Allen Curnow, "Landfall in Unknown Seas" in Vincent O'Sullivan, ed., An Anthology of Twentieth Century New Zealand Poetry (Oxford University Press, London, 1970), page 117.
[24] Wednesday's Children, op.cit., page 219.
[25] Ibid., page 287.

The use of the word "slight" to describe the world of the novel suggests that Hyde herself saw the smallness of Wednesday's dream world. Here at the end of the novel when all has been revealed, she writes of that world as a dream world, as being even more removed from physical reality than the reader might have presumed, when she describes it as "a dream within a dream". The "slightness" of Wednesday's world refers only to its physical size. The physical and external world is not important in this novel. Wednesday's imaginative world which dominates the novel is wider in both experience and perception than most outer worlds that are described in realistic novels in New Zealand.

Much of the novel is taken up with events that Wednesday becomes involved in either because of her dream world or because of her fortune-telling. Many of these events reveal little about her inner world, at least until the reader has come to Wednesday's letter to Bellister and can then turn to re-assess all that has gone on in the novel. The reader can be distracted by things that are happening seemingly in a physical world and conclude that certain speeches that Wednesday and others make on "set" topics are distractions in an account of a rather bizarre set of incidents. These set speeches are the hints to the perceptive reader that the world described in the novel is not as it appears on the surface. What it is really like is rather more difficult to determine. The hints made in the set speeches, the letter to Bellister, and the poem at the end of the novel contribute aspects of Wednesday's inner world which when put together make it rather similar to other inner worlds described in New Zealand novels. The size of that world, both emotionally and physically, is

clear. At the end of the novel the reader discovers that the point of view has not been that of an omniscient narrator as he will have presumed, but has been from the inside of Wednesday's head. The form of the novel prevents Hyde making use of any other time sequence than that of chronological time.

It is Wednesday's expressed attitudes to certain key topics that indicates that she has much in common with other inhabitants of private, inner worlds. In her letter to Mr Bellister Wednesday explains to him her attitude to death, an attitude that is very similar to that of any other character in a subjective novel:

> Oh, Mr Bellister, people aren't merely flesh and bones ... I have realised why they respect and fear death so greatly. It's because death is the most contagious plague in the world ... and we've all got it, we've all got it, if the body were all. [26]

The final clause is crucial; in Wednesday's world the body is not all. If anything, the body is less important than the mind, and for that reason she does not fear death. Unfortunately, Hyde does not put her in a situation where her authentic attitude to death can be expressed more subtly.

In the same way, Wednesday explains what makes great art. She and one of her sons make up a poem about England, and Dorset, the son, asks if the poem is true. Wednesday tells him:

> Not exactly. But it could be and it ought to be. And the things that aren't right only exist for a moment, but the things that could be and ought to be right exist for eternity. And if a thing exists in eternity, but hasn't quite got down to existing *here*, every now and again, something flashes, like the light-shutter in your camera, and anyone who happens

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[26] Ibid., page 276.

> to be standing by at the moment can see it perfectly clear, without its veils. That's how most of the good books and good poems succeed in getting written.

Truth lies behind the physical reality of things; physical reality is a veil which must be drawn aside in order that the real thing can be seen. That physical reality is not truth is best explained in Wednesday's account of how bad books get written:

> And the way most of the bad books and poems get written is because people who don't have these flashes, and who would be very much upset if they did, insist on talking about facts as if facts were truth, instead of being only the littlest part of truth, like the chippy bit of an iceberg which is all you see above the ocean. [27]

There are few more damning accounts of the realistic novel than this, yet Wednesday's theories only receive such an occasional airing that they tend to be forgotten as she progresses from one extraordinary incident to another. More than many characters in subjective novels she talks about truth and reality, and makes clear in these speeches that what is usually accepted as being true and real is not so. Truth and reality for Wednesday lie in her inner world, not in the outer world which has the audacity to consider that it is the real world. Because Hyde writes in the style of the realistic novelist the reader believes that it is the physical events of the novel that are important. Wednesday's ideas about truth and reality and about the importance of the inner world can be overlooked because they seem irrelevant to the events in which she is involved.

The reader is told by Attica, one of Wednesday's children that "we trust one sense far too much, the proud sense of sight, whose explanations are all to reason, where touch, taste and smell often speak in muted voices to deeper

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[27]Ibid., pages 143-144.

faculties."[28] Yet so little in the novel inclines the reader to distrust the sense of sight, until the end when all is revealed to be not as it has appeared.

Looking back on the novel with the knowledge gained from Wednesday's letter to Bellister, the reader realises that a strong case has been made for the superiority of her private interpretation of the world over the public interpretation of those, like her family, who condemn what she does. Yet the reader has to wait until the end of the novel for all those pieces to fall into place, and for Wednesday's world to be seen as a whole. This in itself is not a defect; the defect lies in the necessity of the letter at all, that Hyde could not find a form which would suitably convey to the reader both Wednesday's private interpretation of reality and the fact that her interpretation, contrary to expectation, is more true and more real than an interpretation that relies on facts for its validity.

Like most other subjective novelists in New Zealand Hyde wanted to write about both "this" world and "that" world. She never solved the problems that this desire caused in her fiction. Despite this, she made apparent the possibility of interpreting the New Zealand experience in a private way. She made clear too that the inner world was to be inhabited largely by those who saw themselves as excluded from the outer, public world. The private worlds of Eliza Hannay and Wednesday Gilfillan have much that is similar to other private worlds of the novel in New Zealand, just as Eliza and Wednesday share with other creators of inner worlds a position of having been "edged off the earth"[29] by those who consider themselves to have a monopoly over truth and reality.

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[28]Ibid., page 127.
[29]Ibid., page 274.

C : JANET FRAME

INTRODUCTION

More than any other subjective novelist writing in New Zealand, Janet Frame has established the parameters of this mode of fiction. In terms of both quality and quantity (she is the author of nine novels) she is the leading practitioner in this fictional form. The quality of her fiction alone should lead us to question the accepted dictum that the realistic novel is the best form for interpreting the New Zealand experience.

My discussion of Janet Frame's novels focusses on two aspects of her writing: an examination of those characters she chooses as her "visionary elite"[1] and the ways in which she establishes their alienation from the society in which they live, an alienation which occurs because of the nature of their vision; and the nature of the vision itself.

1. JANET FRAME'S OUTSIDERS

Frame establishes her characters' alienation from the world in which they live by the use of external detail as well as by describing their vision of the world. She chooses her characters at a period in their lives when she sees them as being most cut off from those around them. I have already made clear the groups whose experience of the world is considered insignificant in the realistic novel. Frame chooses her characters from several of these groups -

[1]Patrick Evans, "Alienation and the Imagery of Death" in Meanjin, Vol.32, No.3, September 1973, page 296.

children, women, old men, and those considered intellectually subnormal. This range of characters distinguishes her from other subjective novelists who use only those characters who closely resemble themselves - women writing of women, Maoris writing of Maoris, and men writing about men.

Frame's characters grow older as she does. In Part One of Owls Do Cry her characters are children, a stage of life to which she never returns. In Part Two, Daphne Withers, her visionary character, is a young woman, and in the three novels that succeed Owls Do Cry the main characters are women at a stage in their lives when they are most isolated from the society in which they live. Istina Mavet in Faces in the Water, Zoe Bryce in The Edge of the Alphabet and Vera Glace in Scented Gardens for the Blind are women growing old in a society which has no place for women who have not achieved the roles of wife and mother.

The Adaptable Man breaks this pattern. It has no main character but focusses on a group of people. Frame's choice of the elderly Bert Wattling as the only character with a true vision of the world indicates that her women characters have reached a stage in their lives when they are no longer the most powerless group in the society in which they live. When they reach this stage they are not useful to Frame as vehicles of her vision of the world. A State of Siege confirms the conclusion of The Adaptable Man. Malfred Signal is the middle-aged protagonist of Frame's sixth novel. Of women at this stage in their lives Frame writes:

> A woman in middle age looks inward to snatch at and rescue the desirable parts of herself; a man also looks and snatches, but he looks outward and his desperate capture is another human being, a woman - his wife, a mistress. [2]

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[2]Janet Frame, A State of Siege (Pegasus, Christchurch, 1967), page 165.

Middle-aged women find power in themselves, and thus are no longer the most powerless section of society. Frame indicates that she no longer finds women most suitable characters, by having Malfred die at the end of A State of Siege. The death is important for other reasons, but it also marks the end of this kind of character in Frame's novels.

The Rainbirds, Frame's seventh novel, is in part an examination of masculine powerlessness. Godfrey Rainbird is killed and then returns to life. The fame that accompanies his miraculous recovery causes him to lose his job and thus any acceptable part in the society in which he lives. Godfrey retreats into his house, but as a male in a society which values physical skill above all, he is not capable of turning inwards to his own resources and discovering power within himself. Cut off from all that has given him power and domination, Godfrey becomes a shell of a person.

Frame showed her awareness of what a man suffers when stripped of his physical powers in her second novel Faces in the Water. Istina Mavet looks at the men in the mental hospital and reflects that

> I could not forget their hopelessness; it seemed deeper than that of the women, for all the masculine power and pride were lost and some of the men were weeping and in our civilisation it seems that only a final terrible grief can reduce a man to tears. [3]

In her two latest novels, Intensive Care and Daughter Buffalo, Frame turns her attention to men who by becoming old have been stripped of their power and pride. They lose these possessions more naturally than Godfrey Rainbird does,

[3]Janet Frame, Faces in the Water (George Braziller, New York, 1961), page 170.

but the loss is no less for them.

Janet Frame has written of the distinction that she makes in her own life and in her world between what she calls "this world" and "that world". "This world" is the world of outer, physical reality, a public world; "that world" is the inner world of imagination, ideas and emotions.[4] She has made apparent her preference for "that world". Despite this preference, she is an astute observer of "this world", and this becomes obvious in the ways in which she uses external detail to distinguish her visionary characters from those whose vision of the world she considers to be inauthentic. In this section of the thesis in which I examine the ways in which Frame distinguishes between these two groups, I make use of her penetrating observation of the physical details of her characters and the society in which they live.

Janet Frame's Female Characters

In all her novels Frame must show clearly which character it is whose interpretation of the world is private, and who lives in an inner reality. She must show how that inner and private world is superior to the external, public world which most people consider to be superior. And she must indicate how the character who, according to her values, has the superior vision is alienated from the world in which he or she lives because his or her vision of that world is considered to be insignificant. How she conveys the inner, private reality is something I discuss later in this chapter. Here I want to discuss the main way that she establishes the

[4]Janet Frame, "Beginnings" in Landfall, Vol.19, No.1, March 1965, page 45.

superiority of that vision, and the alienation of her character because of that vision.

In every novel except The Edge of the Alphabet the person whose interpretation of reality is private and inward is contrasted with another character who resembles him or her in external detail. This method of contrast enables Frame to make very clear both the superiority of the vision and the alienation of the visionary, without having to resort to much overt comment to establish these facts. The reader is presented with what the world accepts as normality and reality, and with what the world accepts as abnormality and unreality, and it would be an insensitive reader who failed to see that in the world of Frame's novels abnormality and unreality are normal and real, and normality and reality are abnormal and unreal.

In Owls Do Cry the contrast is drawn briefly between Francie and Daphne as Francie moves away from the world of childhood and thus is less able to communicate with Daphne who continues to hold onto the vision of the world they have all had as children. The more extensive contrast, however, is drawn between Chicks and Daphne, and this pattern - comparing two women who are related in some way - is continued in the other novels which have women as their protagonists.

In each case the comparison is drawn between a woman who has done what is expected of her in a society which values conformity in superficial details, and one who has refused to conform in this way, seeing such conformity as a betrayal of her inner and private world which is to her more important. Frame makes it quite clear that Chicks Harlow is the one who should be alienated from the world in which

she lives. So empty of feeling is Chicks that she is able to fill her diary in which she has intended to put all her feelings "and every happening of importance"[5] with an account of the make-up that she uses.[6] The importance of make-up is made apparent later in the novel when Daphne and the other women in the mental asylum are to go on an outing. They are made up with cosmetics,

> because, thought Flora Norris and Sister Dulling, that sort of thing is the first step to leading a normal life; and once they learn which comes first and where, vanishing or cold cream, they move, as one of the chiefs expressed it, in a radio talk, - along the path to sanity, towards the real values of civilisation. [7]

Cosmetics are dangerous - Chicks knows that because on one of her bottles are the words "KEEP AWAY FROM THE EYES", and that frightens her.[8] Yet the danger lies not in the physical blindness which Chicks might suffer, but in the emotional and imaginative blindness she is already suffering from because she has conformed to a world which judges normality by arbitrary and irrational criteria such as the use of cosmetics. Chicks has everything a normal woman could hope for - husband, nice house, three children, a social position she is proud of. Despite that, she is empty of everything Frame considers important - imagination, feelings and ideas. Nothing alleviates Frame's judgement of Chicks; there is nothing positive in the world she lives in.

By the time Frame wrote her second novel, however, she came to judge the Chicks-character less harshly, and the women who have conformed in later novels are often envied by those who have clung to their private and inner worlds.

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[5]Janet Frame, Owls Do Cry (1961; rpt. Sun Books, Melbourne, 1967), page 96.
[6]Ibid., page 111.
[7]Ibid., page 141.
[8]Ibid., page 111.

Daphne Withers' world in Owls Do Cry may be physically uncomfortable but it is in all ways preferable to Chicks' world. In the later novels there is a recognition of the loneliness and emptiness of the inner world in which one is cut off from all others, and a wish to combine the outer world with the inner world. Husbands and children are not signs of imaginative sterility, but indicate emotional and physical fulfilment. Frame's characters come to long for communion with others of the kind that Eliza Hannay and Wednesday Gilfillan wished for in Robin Hyde's novels.

Like Daphne Withers, Istina Mavet in Faces in the Water is compared with her sister, who has remained in the safety of the real world and had a baby and a husband. Istina envies her sister, who is pregnant and seems to Istina to be not only physically full but emotionally complete. Istina lies in her bed in the room beside her sister's, and cries "'Oh God, why am I empty?'"[9] When she and her sister try to share recollections of their childhood "I experienced not a surge of recollected incidents and delights, but a vast invasion of loneliness".[10] This is a repetition of the barrenness Istina felt when she was first released from the mental asylum and went to stay with the same sister. Then she "was burgled of body and hung in the sky like a woman of straw". Again the presence of her sister with her child and husband accentuates Istina's emptiness:

> Have you ever been a spinster living in a small house with your sister and her husband and their new first child? Watching them rub noses and pinch and tickle and in the night, when you lie on the coffin-narrow camp cot that would not hold two people anyway, listening to them

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[9] Faces in the Water, op.cit., page 130.
[10] Ibid., page 128.

because you cannot help it?"[11]

It is no accident that twice Istina is made to see her own emptiness by a sister who has done nothing more than conform to what is expected of her as a woman. From novel to novel the very strong impression comes through of the sacrifices women make in order to hold onto their private interpretation of the world.

Like Istina, Zoe Bryce in The Edge of the Alphabet longs for communion with others, and like Istina her wish is specifically for a husband and a child. Zoe is haunted by her first and only kiss, given to her by a sailor on the boat on which she sails to England from New Zealand. She sees life as a battle in which "the onslaught is with overpowering love and hate". She wonders "Why can't I survive too? Why can't I fit another human being and lock my feeling, powerful and protected, in the enclosure?"[12] Her body becomes evidence of the emotional emptiness of her life:

> She was growing thinner. Something was stealing from her the very shape which made her a woman; the marsupial years had given birth to a creature which had crawled to nourish itself at Zoe's virgin body, and finding no food there, it had begun to devour her breasts themselves and now they hung out of shape like rusty hoops with no hand to care for them and spin them along the golden highways; they were the twisted mouthpieces of dead clarinets which no one played; they were broken water-jugs left empty on the edge of the well; they were weed-grown riverbeds with no memory of a river. [13]

To fill that emptiness Zoe pretends she will have a baby, and buys "fine white wool and inventing her own pattern she knitted, in great secrecy, a tiny dress in shell-stitch, with loops of ribbon at the waist, to fit a new-born baby".[14] Zoe is not compared with another woman who has fulfilled

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[11] Ibid., page 65.
[12] Janet Frame, The Edge of the Alphabet (Pegasus, Christchurch, 1962), page 173.
[13] Ibid., page 191.
[14] Ibid., page 192.

herself in the conventional ways. Zoe's wishes, however, are for the communion with others which the roles of wife and mother seem to offer.

Yet Zoe cannot make an enclosure with another human being. She realises how futile her wish for husband and child is when she sees that she communicates most adequately with a piece of silver paper. She is so far from achieving her goal that she kills herself. Frame means the communication by Zoe's piece of silver paper to suggest the inadequacy of language. This message does come through, but much stronger is the idea of Zoe's emptiness, and her wish for fulfilment in very traditional feminine ways. What the silver paper means for Zoe becomes obvious when she reflects on what she has done:

> Is this the only word I shall ever speak and do I now retreat into silence? My creation. Not knitting. Not the answers in a crossword puzzle. Not a child given to me in gentleness and despair with the open sky flowing over two bodies voyaging hooked and coupled on their coffin-narrow gauge of love. The communication of my life - a kiss in mid-ocean between myself and a half-drunken seaman. The creation of my life - oh my God! - a silver paper shape fashioned from the remains of an empty cigarette packet! [15]

The act of love which creates a child is described ambiguously so that it is at once gentle and desperate, identified with death yet creating life. Frame gives Zoe so little of value to replace what she cannot have because she clings to her own private vision of the world, and the overwhelming feeling in the novel is one of the emptiness of the world Zoe has chosen to live in.

Envy of the woman who has chosen traditional female roles is made explicit in A State of Siege. Like Istina,

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[15]Ibid., page 203.

Malfred Signal is compared with her sister, and is found to be empty. Lucy is described by Malfred as being "vacant".[16] "She dresses neatly, she has no evident cares, she entertains, she reads the recommended books and one or two that she daringly discovers on her own."[17] She seems just like Chicks, though rather less harshly described. Yet Malfred sees her as also being "eternally rich, vague, dreamy".[18] Most importantly, however, Malfred admits to envying Lucy:

> Perhaps I envied Lucy that she was able to spend her time with these old soldiers and highway men while knowing the close comfort of Roland - a nondescript man, neutral in tone - [19]

Lucy has the comfort of her imaginative world and the communion with a husband in her physical world.

Frame's women suffer for their decision to make the terrible journey "across the lonely polar desert",[20] and their suffering is such that the reader must question whether the sacrificing of conventional womanhood is really worth it. The metaphors of sterility and emptiness are so obvious. It seems the inner world offers nothing in return for the abandonment of communion with others.

A Change in Direction

The Adaptable Man, written between Scented Gardens for the Blind and A State of Siege, is a strong indication of Frame's increasing discomfort with the form of the novel she had used so far. In the novels which precede The Adaptable Man her unease is made most apparent through her

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[16] A State of Siege, op.cit., page 199.
[17] Loc.cit.
[18] Ibid., page 198.
[19] Ibid., page 201.
[20] Faces in the Water, op.cit., page 12.

women characters, whose allegiance to their inner and private world is rewarded only with feelings of emptiness. In The Adaptable Man she experiments with the form of the novel in an attempt to find a more congenial way of conveying that private and inward vision. The novel is, as Patrick Evans has observed, "a quest for fictional adaptability".[21] A State of Siege is evidence that she did not find a new form in her experiment. There she returns to the form and the type of character common to the first four novels. At the end of the novel, however, Malfred Signal dies, and her death is symbolic of the death of this type of character and this form of the novel for Frame. Malfred is an ideal character to end this part of Frame's fictional development. As I have indicated before she is a woman reaching a stage when she is no longer powerless, and therefore is no longer the best character to be used as an inhabitant of an inner and private world. Malfred does not belong to that group of Frame's chosen characters that Patrick Evans has referred to as her "visionary elite".[22] When she tries to find the "room two inches behind her eyes" she ends up in the broom cupboard. This is better than being in the woodshed where so many people spend their lives, but Malfred has not gained access to an authentic vision of the world.[23] In choosing Malfred as her protagonist in this novel, Frame marks the transition she makes from the novels in which she makes no concession to any other vision of the world to those later novels in which she tries always to accommodate her vision to that of the world in which most people live. A State of Siege marks the end of one part of

[21]Patrick Evans, Janet Frame (Twayne Publishers, U.S.A., 1977), page 137.
[22]Evans, "Alienation and the Imagery of Death", loc.cit.
[23]A State of Siege, op.cit., page 218.

Frame's development - both in form and in character - and the beginning of another development in which experiment with form already begun in The Adaptable Man is continued, and a greater compassion and tolerance is evident.

The Adaptable Man gives notice of Frame's intention to move away from the women characters who dominate her first four novels. A State of Siege is in some ways an exorcism of her female characters, characters with whom she must have felt more of an identification than she does with the men who are the protagonists of her three latest novels. The fact that she returned to a woman character when she had already announced her intention of moving away from them - in the writing of The Adaptable Man - shows the extent of her empathy with women as characters.

The experiment with form, and the choice of a new group of characters suggests a change in Frame's attitudes towards her own vision and towards the world she saw herself to be in conflict with. The experiment with form occurs for two reasons - for the benefit of the author, and also for the benefit of the reader. This concession to the reader, not a common facet of Frame's writing hitherto, indicates a wish on her part to communicate her vision of the world to as many people as possible in the most comprehensible way possible. The clearest indication of these intentions comes in her seventh novel The Rainbirds.

The concessions Frame makes to the reader in this novel are evident both in form and in choice of character. The Rainbirds is her only attempt to write a conventional novel. In many ways it conforms to Jenny Sparling's parody of what she calls a novel in "the old style"[24] - Godfrey

[24]Janet Frame, The Adaptable Man (Pegasus, Christchurch, 1965), page 137.

Rainbird and Beatrice Muldrew are described in external detail in a manner quite unusual in Frame's fiction, and the plot of the novel moves from one event to the next, just as it would in a realistic novel. The content is of course disconcerting, because Frame is writing about a private interpretation of the world - Godfrey Rainbird's vision of the world when he finds himself isolated from it because he has had the audacity to return from death. The form of The Rainbirds makes it comprehensible, however, by readers who refuse to persevere with Frame's other novels because of their unfamiliarity with the forms she uses there. The fact that Frame was prepared to write a novel in this form indicates that she wished to make her vision of the world accessible to more readers than she had previously.

Godfrey Rainbird is also the most conventional character in any of Frame's novels. By dying and returning to life he makes himself very unconventional, but that happens far enough into the novel for a reader not to be disconcerted by it.

The description of Godfrey at the beginning of the novel establishes him as the type of protagonist common to many realistic novels in New Zealand, and therefore highly unlikely to be found in a Frame novel:

> A skilled clerical worker, European of British birth, twenty, single, not a convicted criminal, not suffering from any physical or mental illness, politically placid, beardless, Godfrey Rainbird was well qualified to be accepted as an assisted immigrant to New Zealand. [25]

Here is a person to be chosen or rejected as an inhabitant of New Zealand, and because he has all the qualifications that make him suitable he is accepted. Young, male,

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[25] Janet Frame, The Rainbirds (Pegasus, Christchurch, 1969), page 7.

European, physically and mentally healthy, and unlikely to cause trouble, Godfrey Rainbird is constructed to become an integral part of New Zealand society. All that is destroyed by his return to life after he has died. When that happens, none of the aspects of his personality that have made him acceptable are sufficient to bring him back to the society in which he once had an automatic place. In some respects the ordinariness of Godfrey should make The Rainbirds the most disturbing of Frame's novels, because in this work she makes very obvious how any person can be isolated from the society in which they live because of their private interpretation of reality. She also demonstrates that it is not just those who are edged off the world who interpret that world in their own way, but that people who seem to be an integral part of that world can also have a vision of that world quite different from that of other people.

In her two latest novels Frame turns to a group who she sees as being equally powerless as women are. In The Rainbirds she demonstrated how powerless a young man can be if stripped of the external attributes which give him power. In Intensive Care and Daughter Buffalo she uses as her characters men who are naturally stripped of power by becoming old in a society which recognises no contribution from old people. Old men appear especially powerless because they have once, by virtue of their masculinity, held power. The loss of it is more acute than it is with old women who, never having had power, have learnt to acquire strength within themselves.

Intensive Care is a novel about "'the politics of helplessness'".[26] This is an admission of the extent to

[26]Janet Frame, Intensive Care (A.H. & A.W. Reed, Wellington, 1971), page 17.

which Frame is prepared to communicate with those sections of society which she has previously considered contemptible. The message of the first four novels in particular is that the vision of the world conveyed in them - a private, inward-looking vision - is a superior vision of the world to the public, outward-looking vision held by most people. By creating an inner, private world Frame's characters accept danger, but that danger is worthwhile because of the rewards of living in a richer world than most people inhabit. The tone of these early novels is didactic; no concessions are made to other visions of the world. It would be very easy to be alienated from the world of Frame's early novels. It seems from the later novels that she realised this and acknowledged that her vision of the world must be more accessible to more readers. Hence the changes in form, and in character. By writing a novel which is described as being about politics Frame has made a statement about the extent to which she belongs to "this world". There have been suggestions in several of the novels about what will happen if society refuses to heed Frame's message. In A State of Siege Malfred Signal contemplates writing to Parliament about the lack of "imaginative experts" in New Zealand.[27] She concludes that as a teacher she could have done more about the production of such experts, but the recognition of political involvement is there. In The Adaptable Man Frame shows, mainly through the character of Alwyn Maude, how values and standards will be eroded if people continue to see the world in terms of physical objects only. The disintegration of the Rainbirds' family life is an indication too of what happens when those whose vision of

[27] A State of Siege, op.cit., page 72.

the world is private and inward-looking are cut off from society.

The implied prophecy of these novels is made explicit in Intensive Care. In the earlier part of the novel Frame demonstrates how the two Livingstone men have been conditioned into violence and savageness because of the contribution they have had to make to the Great War. Tom's participation in particular leads him to be violent and savage in peace time. The time of their lives which the novel concentrates on, however, shows them as pathetic and powerless, because they are old. Tom is able to be exploited by Peg Warren, a woman who has won a reputation for being a "tart".[28] Although Peg makes no secret of what she wants from Tom, she does unwittingly give him companionship which he has craved. Her affection for him is unsullied by the sort of puritan constraints that worried Tom's wife, Eleanor, and caused him to dream of drowning her in the cement slurry at the foundry where he worked.[29] With Peg, "a feeling of extraordinary lightness came over him as if his whole life had been wiped clear, ..."[30] It may not be intentional, but Peg Warren comes across to the reader as an endearing character. It is unlikely that she is meant to have Frame's complete approval, interested as Peg is only in "the level things of life, the earthy things, the facts".[31]

The world portrayed in Part III of the novel is a natural consequence of the world that men like Tom Livingstone have created. Nevertheless, Frame has some sympathy for Tom, Peg Warren, and Tom's brother Leonard, if only because they belong to a world which was less systematic in

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[28] Intensive Care, op.cit., page 99.
[29] Ibid., page 46.
[30] Ibid., page 35.
[31] Ibid., page 86.

its violence, and perhaps where people were more honest about their intentions towards other people. In the world of the Livingstone men and Peg Warren there was still the possibility of love and care; in the world which succeeds it there is the possibility of no feeling at all. Frame's uncharacteristic tolerance towards a character like Peg Warren is explained by this fact. She has sympathy for the Livingstone men, even though they may be the precursors of those who administer the Human Delineation Act, because they are now old and without power.

Frame's sympathy for the Livingstone men comes most obviously in Part III, when the subnormal woman Milly - the character whose vision of the world Frame declares to be authentic - is identified with the world of the Livingstones. When Colin Monk, one of the administrators of the Human Delineation Act, first sees Milly she is sitting under the pear tree in the Livingstones' old garden: "the 'Livingstone pear tree' - something of a monument in the town to a family who lived in the 'old' way among moldy wars and moldier passions".[32] Like the women Tom Livingstone has loved, Milly has "clear violet-coloured eyes".[33] Mouldy wars and mouldy passions may have been the lot of the Livingstones, but they are less mouldy than the passions and wars of men like Colin Monk. Things could be a lot worse than they were with men like the Livingstones, Frame seems to be saying; at the same time, however, she lays the blame for the world that introduces something like the Human Delineation Act at the feet of those who did live in the "old" way.

The third part of Intensive Care is an apocalyptic vision of the world which will result if people continue to

[32] Ibid., page 223.
[33] Ibid., page 224.

refuse to acknowledge the importance of the imagination, the mind and the emotions. The protagonist of this section of the novel is Milly Galbraith, a twenty-six year old woman who has been classified as subnormal, but who has access to experiences that are authentic. Her value is indicated by people's description of her as a "treasure",[34] a word which will alert a reader of Frame's other novels to meanings other than those most apparent. Even Colin Monk, who is not kindly disposed towards her, sees intelligence in her eyes.[35] Because of her intellectual inadequacies, Milly is another of Frame's outsiders. Like the others, however, she is isolated by those around her who refuse to see that she knows more truths than most people.

The Human Delineation Act is designed to eliminate all those people who are considered unsuitable. The Act is to be administered by people trained in mathematics and science, so that no concessions can be made to the world of imagination or emotion. The administrator on whom Frame concentrates is Colin Monk, a mathematician, who, "working with numbers, ... [has] a feeling of cleanness ..."[36] His task is to delineate who in Waipori City, where the Livingstones have lived and where Milly Galbraith now lives, will be animals, and who will be humans and thus allowed to continue living as they do now. New Zealand is to be used as an experiment for the rest of the world - another exercise in social welfare, no doubt. Milly will of course be designated as an animal. The description of the Act takes little time; Frame's concern in this part is to establish the superiority of Milly's vision, and therefore what an

[34] Ibid., page 225.
[35] Ibid., page 224.
[36] Ibid., page 217.

indictment of civilization it is if she is classified as non-human and eliminated.

In both Intensive Care and in Daughter Buffalo the old men protagonists are compared with younger men, and the latter are found to have less access to the truth than those who superficially know nothing of the world in which they live. Tom Livingstone used the power he had as a younger man on bossing his wife and daughters; Colin Monk uses the power he has as a young man to eliminate those people somebody else has decided are not fit to stay alive. Tom Livingstone may not have been an admirable character, but the ways in which he exercised his powers were less dangerous than the ways in which Colin Monk exercises his. There is a nostalgia here which is uncommon in Frame, just as there is an uncharacteristic tolerance towards those who in earlier novels would have been harshly treated. In the face of the kind of devastation men like Colin Monk can wreak, Frame wants to cling to whatever has the possibility of good. This is indeed a change, because the earlier novels demonstrate a desire to cling only to what is already considered by her to be true. Frame's vision of the world has widened considerably when she is prepared to consider the admission of people like Peg Warren and Tom Livingstone into her world.

In form Intensive Care is a combination of the straightforward narrative style Frame used in The Rainbirds and the subjective style of her earlier novels. The accounts of the lives of Tom and Leonard Livingstone are told by an omniscient narrator, a style which is suitable to those two characters. Naomi, Tom's daughter, and Milly Galbraith are allowed to tell their own stories, and these two are granted

an authentic vision of the world.

In Daughter Buffalo the old man, Turnlung, is one of Frame's authentic characters. Demonstrations of the authenticity of his vision come from comparing them with those of a younger man, Talbot Edelman. Frame's concern in this novel is with death, though many of the themes that recur throughout her novels are also touched on here. The authenticity of Turnlung's interpretation of reality is based on his attitude to death, just as the inauthenticity of Talbot's interpretation of reality is based on his attitude to death. In this respect Daughter Buffalo resembles earlier novels such as Scented Gardens for the Blind in its concentration on one aspect of Frame's vision. In previous novels Frame has implied that old men are also outsiders in the society they live in because they can no longer make a significant contribution to that society. In Daughter Buffalo this suggestion is made explicit in her choice of Turnlung as the character whose vision of the world she considers authentic. Whereas novels like Owls Do Cry and Intensive Care can stand alone, the full value of Daughter Buffalo is really only apparent when taken in the context of all Frame's fictional output. The form she uses here is not new for Frame's fiction. The character of Turnlung and the discussion of death clarify certain suggestions made in other novels, but the novel does not add any new dimension to Frame's work in the way that The Adaptable Man or Intensive Care do.

Like other subjective novelists Frame chooses as her main characters those she sees to be most excluded from the world in which they live. Their exclusion occurs because they interpret the world in a private manner, and out of that

interpretation create an inward world. This mode of interpretation is limited, in Frame's view, to those who can make no significant contribution to the society in which they live, because they are children, women, or old men. A subtle form of the Human Delineation Act has been in force long before Frame made it explicit in Intensive Care. Frame's vision of the world develops in that she comes to realise that different groups of people can be alienated from the society in which they live. As her vision of the world changes and widens, the characters of her novels change and so does her fictional form. Having established the ways in which Frame indicates that her characters are outsiders, and the ways in which changes in character influence changes in form in her novels, I want in the next section of this chapter to examine the vision of the novels, with particular reference to her approach to language.

2. THE VISION OF JANET FRAME'S NOVELS

In order to establish the formal and thematic patterns of the subjective novel in New Zealand I have used several of Janet Frame's novels in Section I of the thesis. For this reason I intend to touch only briefly at the conclusion of this chapter on aspects of her novels such as point of view, her use of time and space, and her approach to the themes of death, insanity and art.

It is Frame's use of and approach to language that I have used here as the indicator of the vision of her novels. Most subjective novelists in New Zealand have the same attitude towards language that realistic novelists do - it is a tool which they use without question to convey their

vision of the world to their audience of readers. Frame sees her vision as so different from that of those around her that she doubts that words will be able to convey it. She constantly experiments with language and questions its use. Despite her reservations about it, she concludes that even words are better than the alternatives - such as numbers - with which she might work.

The Search for a New Language

"Words are a risk, too. The first risk. And they've been tampered with before they get into the language, before birth; their very birth is a tampering"[37] Turnlung tells Talbot Edelman in Janet Frame's latest novel, Daughter Buffalo. The reader of Frame's previous eight novels knows the suspicion Frame has about language and of her attempts to either invent a new language without risks, or to work with the language she has so that the risks are minimised or eliminated.

No other subjective novelist shows the degree of concern that Frame does about the risks that using language involves. Partly this arises from the cerebral nature of much of Frame's writing - she enjoys the intellectual exercise of working with language in as many different and new ways as she can. Partly it arises from her commitment to the inner world, a commitment that she herself does sometimes question and modify, but which is nevertheless less equivocal than that of other subjective novelists.

The problem that faces Frame is one that faces any subjective novelist; her solution is more radical than that

[37] Janet Frame, Daughter Buffalo (W.H. Allen, London, 1973), page 119.

of most other subjective novelists. A subjective novelist's interest is in the inner world of his or her characters, in the world of emotion and imagination. The way that the subjective novelist conveys that world must be through words; it cannot be any other way if he or she is to be a novelist. Yet words are treacherous because they acquire their meaning from a world which has shown its hostility to the world of emotion and imagination. To use words is to use the tools of the enemy. To the subjective novelist it seems that the realistic novelist and the world with which he is allied has established a monopoly over language. They have dictated what the meanings of words shall be, and those meanings are related to their use in the outer, physical world.

The subjective novelist must decide whether it is worth taking a risk with words in order that the vision he or she wishes to convey to the reader can be conveyed. He or she is caught in a contradictory situation where to communicate at all he or she must use a facility which seems inadequate.

Janet Frame takes the risk; the irony of her position is that more than any other subjective novelist in New Zealand (and more than most realistic novelists also) she has taken the risk that using words represents for her. She never allows the reader to forget, however, the risks that she is taking in order that her vision of the world may be communicated once more in a different form.

The inadequacies of language are many. Words can be confused in their meaning by merely changing one letter, or by a slight mispronunciation. Daphne Withers in the dead room remembers a confusion the Withers children made between colander and calendar: colanders let water through cabbage

leaves, calendars let the days slip through while attempting to catch them forever. A calendar is nearer in meaning to a colander than we know, but only by confusing the two can we know the true meaning of the word. Thus all words have their meanings in doubt. The most extensive examination of this type of confusion comes in Daughter Buffalo. After visiting the Natural History Museum with Talbot Edelman Turnlung reflects on the trauma associated with the acquisition of language. He is reminded of the word "jewel" which caused him much suffering and hope. The reader is immediately alerted to the possibilities of the situation, knowing Frame's attraction to words that have their meaning in things of value. Turnlung is told that in the class above him at school there are *"jewel desks"*.[38] Turnlung imagines that "sapphires, diamonds, rubies, carnelian, bloodstone" are distributed to the pupils in this class.[39] He is desperate to be promoted there, and is fortunate enough to be moved up earlier than he expected. For three days he waits for the jewels to be brought out. When they are not, he asks another child about the jewel desks. The confusion Turnlung is in is apparently solved by this boy telling him the desks are "'Duel desks. Duel meaning two, a fight with swords'".[40] But Turnlung discovers that he too is wrong; the word is "dual" as he discovers in his dictionary.[41] Because of the confusion he has experienced, "jewel" has had a special meaning for him. When death is associated with jewel in a poem he reads, death itself takes on a special meaning.[42]

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[38]Ibid., page 93.
[39]Ibid., page 94.
[40]Ibid., page 96.
[41]Loc.cit.
[42]Ibid., page 97.

Such confusion over the meanings of words which can alter according to how they are pronounced is one of the risks of using language. Another risk lies in the careless way that people use words and phrases without stopping to examine what they really mean. In The Edge of the Alphabet Thora Pattern reflects on the use of the phrase "the open sea, so-called because people hope through words to penetrate its closed, locked and bolted doors".[43] What does this phrase "overseas" mean that is so often used of New Zealanders who travel? It is invested with a meaning which no-one can explain. An imaginary conversation is reported between two inhabitants of Waimaru about Toby Withers's trip to England. One discredits it because he says all the things Toby saw and did could be done in New Zealand; the other keeps reiterating the phrase "overseas" in order to give Toby's trip some kind of magic.[44] Neither participant in the conversation defines "overseas", but the reader realises that such a commonly used phrase has more meanings than the accepted one.

That words are not a security becomes apparent from Godfrey Rainbird's experience with them. Before Godfrey dies and returns to life, he has accepted the use of words and their meanings along with all the other securities of his life. His death and return to life throw everything into doubt. Now he can see "the word and its lining";[45] and the "cold spelling"[46] of the words is more accurate than the accepted spelling. The letter from the head of the tourist office where Godfrey worked offers him "a moth's gawes" as compensation for being sacked. As Godfrey reflects: "A

[43] The Edge of the Alphabet, op.cit., page 52.
[44] Ibid., pages 46-47.
[45] The Rainbirds, op.cit., page 135.
[46] Ibid., page 137.

hundred pounds is indeed a moth's jaws to help us face the wolf at the door."[47] Godfrey is terrified by his ability to see the lining of words at first. When he realises that he is closer to the truth because of his enhanced vision he is not worried by the lack of security which is a consequence of doubting the meanings of words.

While she is making apparent the inadequacies of the language she must use in order to convey her vision of the world, Frame is also constantly experimenting with ways of using language so that she is not bound by the meanings that language has in the outer world but is invested with meanings that Frame gives it. One method she uses extensively is that used by poets - the use of metaphor and simile. The use of such devices provides a link between the inner and the outer worlds, because things of the inner world are often conveyed in terms of things of the outer world thus making them comprehensible to the reader. No commitment, however, is made to the outer world, so that the vision of the inner world is not compromised. Francie Withers explains the inability of adults to exercise their emotions and their minds in terms of Easter eggs. For the child Daphne to whom this explanation is being made, Easter eggs are valuable, just as the inner world of the imagination and emotions is valuable. Mrs Mawhinney who employs Francie to clean her house keeps a room full of Easter eggs because "When you're grown up, you're frightened to taste the nice things, like Easter eggs, in case you never get them again, or something ..." The explanation is made in the sentence which follows: "it's something inside people that they're afraid to spend." That this "something" is a thing of value has been established

[47] Loc.cit.

by comparing it with a physical object which has value for the two participants in the conversation. That they are talking about something more than a woman who hoards mere physical objects like Easter eggs is established by Francie's reference to "something inside people". A child can be vague in this way; even so, she conveys through the metaphor and through the indirect statement the nature of the thing of which she is speaking.[48]

There are long, sustained metaphors such as that of the Venini chandelier in The Adaptable Man. Muriel Baldry has inherited it, and as soon as electricity comes to the village it will be able to be hung and lit. Electricity is a sign of progress, like the Overspill, for those who want progress. Frame's chosen characters in this novel, like Bert Wattling, are disconcerted by the sort of progress that is represented by electricity and the Overspill (a catch-all phrase used to describe immigration to the village from London). Electricity is commonly viewed with suspicion in Frame's novels, partly perhaps because of the connection between electricity and shock treatment in mental asylums. Apart from that connection, electricity gives only artificial light, not complete illumination. Anyone who believes as Muriel Baldry does that the chandelier will provide more than artificial light, is mistaken in his or her perceptions of the world. The chandelier therefore becomes a metaphor for lightness and darkness in the novel, radiating out from its physical presence multiple meanings.

In two novels in particular - The Edge of the Alphabet and Scented Gardens for the Blind - Frame explores the limits of language and tries to reach some kind of solution to the

[48] Owls Do Cry, op.cit., page 36.

problem that is posed for her as a novelist by the inadequacy of the tools with which she has to work. The conclusion she reaches at the end of Scented Gardens for the Blind - the invention of a new language which is unintelligible to those who hear it[49] - is one that she is attracted to in novels which follow.

The Edge of the Alphabet examines the ways in which those who live at the edge of the alphabet communicate. At the edge of the alphabet

> words like plants either grow poisonous tall and hollow about the rusted knives and empty drums of meaning, or, like people exposed to a deathly weather, shed their fleshy confusion and show luminous, knitted with force and permanence. [50]

Toby, Zoe and Pat all want to make connections with other people, and to do so they use the only method they have which is words. Words do not fulfil their purpose for these three. Pat tries to dictate to Zoe and Toby what they should do with their lives, but they refuse to listen. They do not hear his words in the way Pat wishes them to be heard - his words have a physical presence only for Zoe and Toby, but do not penetrate into the inner world where Pat wishes them to have meaning. This is because Pat does not know the language by which he should communicate to Zoe and Toby. Toby and Zoe are similarly ill-equipped to communicate in ways that will get them what they want. Toby wants to write a book about the Lost Tribe. When he has made all the physical preparations - bought an exercise book, a pencil with a rubber, and sat down to write - he finds that he can only write the title. He is

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[49] Janet Frame, Scented Gardens for the Blind (Pegasus, Christchurch, 1963), page 192.
[50] The Edge of the Alphabet, op.cit., page 13.

> seized by fear. Perhaps that was his book, just that, three words, nothing else, no chapters or sections or descriptions of people. [51]

And it is all Toby can write, because the description of the lost tribe, like the description of those who live at the edge of the alphabet, cannot adequately be done with words. Silence is Toby's only answer to such a problem, though he does not choose to be silent in the way that Erlene Glace does.

Zoe Bryce wants to love some other human being, preferably a man, and be loved by him. But she cannot communicate this longing in any acceptable form. The only adequate communication she makes between herself and other people is with a silver tree fashioned from a cigarette wrapper. "I am making something at last" she reflects.[52] Everyone admires it: "Zoe was not used to being the centre of admiring attention; not for something she had made ..."[53] When Zoe realises the magnitude of what she has done - communicated more adequately with the silver paper tree than she has ever done with words, she commits suicide, leaving no explanation - "Why need one write a note if one can communicate with a left-over wrapping of silver paper from an empty cigarette packet?"[54] At the end of the novel those who live at the edge of the alphabet have not found their speech. "One day we who live at the edge of the alphabet will find our speech", Thora Pattern, the narrator, tells the reader.[55]

There is no solution for the problem posed for those who wish to communicate but for whom words are inadequate in

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[51] Ibid., page 149.
[52] Ibid., page 202.
[53] Ibid., page 203.
[54] Ibid., page 204.
[55] Ibid., page 224.

The Edge of the Alphabet. In the novel which follows - Scented Gardens for the Blind - Frame examines the possibility of communicating by silence. Erlene Glace, the daughter of Edward and Vera Glace, has decided not to speak. Her mother is convinced that she must talk again.

> People dread silence because it is transparent; like clear water, which reveals every obstacle - the used, the dead, the drowned - silence reveals the cast-off words and thoughts dropped in to obscure its clear stream. [56]

Edward too believes that she should speak. He believes that when he sees her again "she would break her silence, not with cries or moans, but with new, articulate language which would replace the derelict words washed up on barren islands of the mind and sprouting rank, poisonous growths of time and use".[57] Erlene, however, does not wish to communicate with words. She makes her most adequate and rewarding communication with Uncle Black-beetle who lives on her window sill and with whom there is no need for words. How she communicates is not explained. She knows that she is related to him in some way[58] and she watches him carefully. "For a long time she stared at Uncle Black-Beetle, and he stared at her. Then she found to her surprise that she could talk to him."[59] Their speech, which the reader knows is not conveyed through words, has, however, to be conveyed to the reader through words. Frame realises the dilemma in which this places her. She has created what seems like the ideal situation - a character who refuses to communicate with words and therefore cuts herself off from human communion, but is able to make adequate communication with a black-beetle for whom no words are necessary. Yet to convey that

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[56] Scented Gardens for the Blind, op.cit., page 68.
[57] Ibid., page 156.
[58] Ibid., page 27.
[59] Ibid., page 62.

situation to the reader Frame herself needs words. The trick that she plays at the end of the novel is an attempt to find her way out of such a contradictory story. Vera Glace, the primary narrator of the novel, has been dumb for thirty years. Her telling of the story is impossible, so the entire novel does not exist. Janet Frame has created the novel and then destroyed its creation at the end, knowing, however, that the novel as a physical entity which people will continue to read still exists. Her other solution is to give Vera, when she does talk, a new language: "'Ug-g-Ug. Ohhh Ohhh g. Ugg.' Out of ancient rock and marshland; out of ice and stone."[60]

The idea of communicating important things through a language which has no meaning in the external world is one that Frame continues in other novels. When the stone is thrown through Malfred Signal's window it is covered in a piece of paper with the words "*Help Help*" and "the news that was not in any language she had learned".[61] Malfred has spent the whole night trying to communicate with other inhabitants of the island through a telephone that is disconnected. She has made contact with her past, but that has not been with words conventionally used. Now there is communication between someone and herself but not in a language that she knows. What she has discovered is beyond being communicated in the language which belongs to her past.

Similarly, Godfrey Rainbird sees that jumbled words convey meaning more adequately than do those which appear normal. And the spelling of Milly Galbraith in Intensive Care gives more meaning to the words she uses than more conventional spelling would do. Her spelling of the word

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[60]Ibid., page 192.
[61]A State of Siege, op.cit., page 228.

"American" as "Amerrykin"[62] gives the word meaning which the original does not have but which is appropriate to this novel, where the Americans are indeed "merry kin" of those who administer the Human Delineation Act, and try to be "merry kin" to those who will suffer under the Act.[63]

In Intensive Care Frame experiments with language as she does in all her novels. Milly shows a proper reverence for words. It is reported of her that "She's afraid of words"[64] which is a correct attitude in Frame's view. Frame realises, however, that there are less adequate ways of communicating than with words. The Human Delineation Act is administered by those who work with numbers. Communication on a vitally important issue such as deciding who will live and who will die is decided by numbers. Working with them gives Colin Monk a feeling "of cleanness ... How I admire the immunity of numbers, their untouchability, their inaccessibility; every moment they shine, newly bathed, concealing, never acknowledging the dark work they do."[65] The asset which words have in comparison is that they have at least been sullied by time. The ambiguity of their meanings in this context is seen as an advantage.

For Turnlung, the retired accountant, numbers have become ambiguous also. In the public library he sees the numbers 800 as GOD, and on a bus he reads a list of figures headed up with 1800 as AGONY.[66] Words are a risk, numbers are a risk. There is no certain way of communicating what is valuable - agony and god can as easily be communicated through numbers as they can through words. Silence and new

[62] Intensive Care, op.cit., page 308.
[63] Ibid., page 283.
[64] Ibid., page 235.
[65] Ibid., page 217.
[66] Daughter Buffalo, op.cit., pages 99-100.

languages have their disadvantages also. Perhaps the only answer to the quandary in which Frame finds herself lies in the fact that she continues to write and thus continues to use words. She believes in the assertion that Turnlung makes that "We need our solitary workers - our writers, painters, composers"[67] and she writes with the only tools available to her in answer to that need.

CONCLUSION

In varying degrees all of Frame's novels conform to the patterns of the subjective novel which I have outlined in Section I of the thesis. In her first four novels the narration is told from the point of view of the mind of one of the characters of the novel. In the opening section of Owls Do Cry she makes clear that what is to be told in this novel is spoken by Daphne from "the dead room".[68] The condemnation of Chicks is Daphne's condemnation; the description of Toby as living in a "half-world"[69] is Daphne's description of him. In Faces in the Water the reader has only Istina's version of what happens in mental asylums, so that Frame's claim at the beginning of the novel that the novel is "a work of fiction" is accurate.

In The Adaptable Man the hand of the author manipulating the mental and physical behaviour of her characters towards certain ends of her own becomes more obvious than it has been in previous novels. This is partly the result of the technical experimentation being conducted by her. One part of the experiment is with the degree of authorial

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[67] Ibid., page 99.
[68] Owls Do Cry, op.cit., page 9.
[69] Ibid., page 53.

intrusion which she can allow. That Janet Frame felt at ease when she was more obviously directing the narrative becomes apparent in A State of Siege. In this novel the reader is guided by the narrator until it is time for Malfred to explore the room two inches behind her eyes. Frame's guiding hand has been necessary until this stage because Malfred is not and does not become one of Frame's "visionary elite". She does only find herself in a broom cupboard, instead of in "the room two inches behind the eyes". She needs guidance, and so does the reader faced as he is here with an inferior consciousness.

For the same reason Frame narrates Godfrey Rainbird's story in The Rainbirds. Godfrey because of his sex and adopted nationality is not capable of being one of Frame's authentic characters. The extraordinary situation in which he finds himself makes him turn inward, but like Malfred he needs to be guided. The narrative technique of this novel, which follows the conventional pattern of the realistic novel, makes it the most accessible of Frame's novels. A similar pattern is followed in those parts of Intensive Care in which the story of the Livingstone brothers is told. In Part III of the novel the reader is abandoned by the author to the consciousness of one of her chosen characters. The "doll-normill"[70] Milly Galbraith tells her story "about the Deciding".[71] In Daughter Buffalo Frame returns to the point of view used in her earlier novels, so that the events of the novel are illuminated by the consciousness of the two main characters, Talbot Edelman and Turnlung.

Frame makes apparent what she considers a correct attitude to time either by preaching about what she considers

[70] Intensive Care, op.cit., page 239.
[71] Ibid., page 232.

unacceptable attitudes, or by demonstrating acceptable ones. In The Adaptable Man she explores inauthentic responses to time through the characters of Aisley, Russell and Alwyn Maude. In the novel which follows this one, A State of Siege, she demonstrates a correct attitude towards time as Malfred lays siege to the room two inches behind her eyes. The siege takes five hours in mechanical time, but covers a period of twenty-eight years in her imagination.

Frame's characters spend the most important parts of their lives in small physical spaces - houses or the rooms of houses. In this respect their spatial experiences resemble most closely those of most New Zealanders who are urban and domestic dwellers. Movement from one place to another is often a symbol of imaginative movement. When Malfred Signal in A State of Siege wants to move from the world of public reality in which she has lived in Matuatangi for fifty-three years, she moves to the island of Karemoana so that she may explore the world of emotion and imagination which has been blocked from her for so long.

The isolation of characters such as Daphne Withers, Vera Glace and Godfrey Rainbird is symbolised by their physical isolation in small, cut-off places. Both Vera and Daphne are put into mental asylums which isolate them physically from the community in which they live, just as their vision of the world has already imaginatively isolated them from that world. When Daphne makes herself unacceptable even in the mental asylum her alienation from that community is symbolised by her removal to "a little house on the side of the mountain".[72] When Erlene Glace refuses to speak she signifies the isolation this causes her by shutting herself

[72] Owls Do Cry, op.cit., page 130.

into her bedroom. Godfrey Rainbird's world becomes that of his home. "He stayed at home with the quarter-acre section the apparent boundary of his life."[73] He has escaped being locked up in a coffin but he becomes locked in his home, which is little better.

The conclusion Frame reaches in Daughter Buffalo, a novel which is devoted to the examination of authentic and inauthentic attitudes towards death, is that death is part of the natural cycle. It is a view that she has been proposing all through her novels, and one which receives its fullest exposition in her latest work.

In A State of Siege Frame describes most fully what she considers to be the correct attitude towards art. Like all subjective novelists her interest in art lies not in the finished, tangible and visible product, but in the process which creates that product. For many years Malfred Signal has been only interested in the public response and acceptance of her painting. Her paintings are admired by

> those who were pleased to recognize in her work
> the place where they had picnicked last summer,
> the beach or river they had bathed in, the
> corner or camp where they'd pitched their tent,
> the gorge they'd driven through. [74]

When Malfred goes to Karemoana to explore "the room two inches behind the eyes", she decides she will paint a painting that will be "like no other painting she had made. It would be part of her New View."[75] On her fifth day on the island she feels the urge to paint. She takes the tubes of lanolin she used on the body of her dying mother and mixes them with tempera paint.[76] Then she paints a painting which she

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[73] The Rainbirds, op.cit., page 167.
[74] A State of Siege, op.cit., page 29.
[75] Loc.cit.
[76] Ibid., page 62.

describes in the following way:

> There were no people in my painting. No one could make out in this foam of lanolin the arm of someone being drawn under by the waves. Not even the bereaved mockingbird in search of its love could find it fluttering in this storm of lanolin. There were no people in my painting. *No people.* [77]

The process of painting such a picture is important in that it reveals how Malfred's view of the world has changed. Malfred is no longer concerned to win admiration for her painting by making an acceptable work of art. She is using the process of painting for her own ends, and for Frame this is the only true way of regarding artistic creation.

The mental state described as insanity fascinates Frame in most of her novels. In several the authentic vision of the world is that held by a character who is considered insane by those holding power in the society in which they live. Daphne Withers, Istina Mavet, Vera Glace, Godfrey Rainbird, Milly Galbraith are all people whose mental state is unacceptable to those around them. All of them, according to Frame, have superior visions of the world to the visions of those people whose physical and mental behaviour is so acceptable that they have power to commit people to asylums. Frame pleads for tolerance, and for a broader definition of what is acceptable. Although her case is persuasive, she defeats it to some extent by her own lack of tolerance towards those whose vision of the world she sees as unacceptable and limited.

Janet Frame distinguishes herself from other subjective novelists in several ways. Her commitment to "that world" is almost unequivocal. Her range of characters is wider than that of any other novelist, and her discussion of

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[77] Ibid., page 63.

themes which most writers prefer not to write of is more extensive than that of any other writer. Unlike most New Zealand novelists, both subjective and realistic, she experiments constantly with the forms of her novel in an attempt to find the form that will most adequately convey her vision of the world to her readers.

Despite Frame's domination over the subjective mode of fiction in New Zealand it is as well to remember that other novelists writing in this way offer different but no less valid perceptions of the world. While many subjective novelists may not reach Frame's technical and formal proficiency, they offer us visions of the world that are as rich and varied as those that Frame gives us.

D : SYLVIA ASHTON-WARNER

Like Robin Hyde and Janet Frame, Sylvia Ashton-Warner is conscious of the distinction between what Frame has called "this" world - the physical world - and "that" world - the world of the emotions and imagination. Unlike Frame, Ashton-Warner is concerned to link "this" world with "that" world. Much as Frame might be tempted by the physical world, her allegiance remains to the inner world. Ashton-Warner's distinction of the inner world from the outer world makes her different from novelists like Joy Cowley and Margaret Sutherland who do not discuss the division between the outer and inner world and thus do not examine the possibility of a union between the two.

Ashton-Warner is conscious, as are Frame and Hyde, of the status of her characters as outsiders in the society in which they live. Like any other novelist whose work is discussed here, Ashton-Warner is important both for the contribution her novels make to the development of the subjective mode of fiction in New Zealand, and for the vision of the world which is conveyed through those novels. Her contribution to the development of the fiction is to bridge the gap between Frame and her allegiance to "that" world, and the later novelists - Cowley, Sutherland, Watson - who without question or discussion combine "this" world with "that" world, in their characters' search for an identity which will enable them to live in the outer world while keeping the vision of the inner world inviolate.

My discussion of Ashton-Warner's five novels follows a similar pattern to that used in discussing the novels of

Hyde and Frame: an examination of the nature of her characters who see themselves and are seen as outside acceptable society; and an examination of the vision of the world these characters have.

MOTHER, MISTRESS, AND VISIONARY: THE WOMEN IN SYLVIA ASHTON-WARNER'S NOVELS

Like all the female novelists discussed here except Frame, Ashton-Warner limits her outsiders to one class - that of women. Ashton-Warner does not see her characters as being excluded from the society in which they live because they are women; it is the nature of their vision of the world which isolates them from that world. Unlike Hyde, Ashton-Warner does not conclude that the nature of her characters' vision is a result of their female gender.

There is an irony in Sylvia Ashton-Warner's casting of her women in traditional roles - those of mother and mistress - which are associated with subservience and passivity. In these roles women are at the furthest remove from the male-dominated society in which they live, even though they are roles in which women gain the greatest approval from that society. The approval comes because women are so distant, in a world of their own making which does not impinge on the seemingly more important world created by men. The vision of the world held by women in this position is therefore at a far remove from the vision of the world held by most people around them. To be a visionary and a mother, or a visionary and a mistress, is to cut oneself right off from acceptable society. Ashton-Warner does not seem to realise this. She does not see that her

characters' longing for the role of mother may be counter-productive to the acceptance of her characters' private vision of the world.

It is a weakness of the novels that she is not able to see the politics of the situation in which she places her characters. Unlike Frame, she does not understand the nature of power in the society in which she lives, and so she does not fully understand the position her characters are in. There is intuitive understanding maybe, but not the kind of intellectual appreciation which occurs in Frame, and which makes her statements rather more comprehensible than many of Ashton-Warner's.

Another problem which arises from her intuitive approach is what Dennis McEldowney has called "A problem of grounding" - "that of embodying emotion in an acceptable form."[1] An intellectual approach like Frame's imposes its own order; an approach through emotion like Ashton-Warner's can lead to the excessively emotional writing that is Ashton-Warner at her worst.

Ashton-Warner's women need men, and they need children. One is never quite sure whether the men are only necessary in order that the children might be produced, because certainly the primary relationship any of the women in these novels has is with their own or someone else's children. Their relationship with men is always seen in sexual terms; there is no idea that men and women may be friends, or friends and lovers, or colleagues, or even equals.

Without a doubt, biology is destiny in Ashton-Warner's novels. Because a woman is physically equipped to bear

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[1]Dennis McEldowney, "Sylvia Ashton-Warner: A problem of grounding" in Landfall, Vol.23, No.3, September 1969, page 235.

children, in Ashton-Warner's view she is also mentally equipped to be a mother. Mothering is as instinctual as it appears to be with animals; for this reason the two mothers who appear in Bell Call are often compared with animals. If a woman has no children of her own - as Anna Vorontosov in Spinster and Germaine de Beauvais in Incense to Idols do not - then they take on other people's children to fulfil their maternal needs. Anna teaches infants because she needs children around her. After the six weeks of the summer holidays she reflects that she cannot resign despite the low grading on her teaching because

> my arms have become itchy on the inside to hold children. From the wrists on the inner side along the skin right up to the shoulders and across the breast I know a physical discomfort. If ever flesh spoke mine does; for the communion of hands, the arms stretching round my waist, and black heads bumping my breast ... The truth is that I am enslaved. I'm enslaved in one vast love affair with seventy children. [2]

Anna is jealous of the mothers of her pupils, thinking that she has more right to the children than their parents have. She looks at the mother of one of her pupils and thinks:

> I don't like her face, this face of a married woman who has borne children. From the reckoning of a spinster her eyes should be soft with fulfilment. But they're hard and accusing and full of suspicion, as though there were no dear little boy to make her thoughts shine and no dear little girl. [3]

Anna's wish for Eugene, the lover she has discarded, is not for companionship with another adult, nor for sexual activity, but a longing for the child she refused to conceive with him. [4]

Germaine de Beauvais, the protagonist of Ashton-Warner's second novel, Incense to Idols, has five lovers.

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[2] Sylvia Ashton-Warner, Spinster (1958; rpt. Penguin Books, London, 1961), page 190.
[3] Ibid., page 138.
[4] Ibid., page 84.

She chooses to marry one of them, once he has got rid of his wife, because she has fallen in love with his daughter. There is no doubt that if Germaine were to trust to her adult longings for sex and companionship she would either marry or have an affair with Brett Guymer, the local minister. However, he does not have children, and Gordon Hood does. With Corinne, his daughter, she feels an affinity that she cannot feel with any of her male admirers. She imagines Corinne in her arms, and it is a feeling preferable to being herself in the arms of any of the five men.

> I feel her on my knee and it's a release of a kind; a sensation undisruptive to my organs. A rest from my terrible enslavement.

The bodies of this woman - potential mother - and the child are made to fit into one another in a way that the bodies of a man and woman can never be.

> Her limbs are soft and flexible and fit into me and about me ... alive, soft, yielding, claiming, warm, trusting and mine; much more than mine, she's me. I didn't know what arms were for till I knew this child. [5]

Corinne is not Germaine's child, either by birth or by marriage. Despite this, because Corinne is a child and Germaine is a woman, they belong together indisputably.

It is in Ashton-Warner's third novel - Bell Call - that we have the fullest examination of the role of mother. In this novel there are two women with their own children. One is Tarl Prackett, who is the ideological heroine of the novel. The other is Angela, the daughter of the novel's narrator. This narrator is a dead woman who sees most of the events of the novel through the eyes of her husband, Daniel. Because both Tarl and Angela have their own children, they are better exponents of Ashton-Warner's view

[5] Sylvia Ashton-Warner, Incense to Idols (Secker & Warburg, London, 1960), page 250.

on maternity than Anna and Germaine were, who were mothers only by proxy.

For both Angela and Tarl, mothering is instinctual. They are by nature good mothers, and by nature they want to mother. Their role as a mother makes them beautiful, as Daniel observes as he watches Tarl come up his path with her four children:

> How beautiful the female looks in the center of her young radiating from her in natural gradation, the youngest a part of her, the next near to her and the others spiralling out on the summer grass. [6]

A similar reflection is made about Angela as Daniel watches her gather her children together:

> Is there any more poignant and beautiful picture beneath the protecting heavens than the female animal collecting its young, radiating from the parent center, rising in graded levels? [7]

Angela is described as "the female animal", and the noun "young" is used to describe both sets of children - a word more often associated with animals than with humans. Tarl is most often seen with her four children so that the five of them present a group, rather as animals present a group. Ashton-Warner does in fact compare them to a flock in the novel, again a word more often used of animal families than of human ones: "Through the watching trees, the young assimilating her mood, gamboling about her like a flock of tender animals ..."[8]

Maternal love is the best sort of love, because it is so all-encompassing, and because it is so natural. Thinking about Tarl, Daniel reflects that

> the natural direction of a woman's love at this time of life is to the arriving children.

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[6]Sylvia Ashton-Warner, Bell Call (Robert Hale, London/ Whitcombe & Tombs Ltd., New Zealand, 1969), page 35.
[7]Ibid., page 21.
[8]Ibid., page 28.

> Embraces, kisses, touches and tears bloom to the full among children being as part of a mother as breathing. It is a domestic personal love, a central love, an enduring love, a starting point which, as she matures, turns automatically outward upon others. Without this beginning point, the love for one's children or of children in one's care, a woman seldom comes to universal love. [9]

This is a very strong claim for the power of maternal love and Ashton-Warner makes it without qualification. It is a statement that is borne out by what she says about women in her novels.

Angela and Tarl are contrasted as women, but more especially as mothers. Both of them mother by instinct, and both of them are good mothers. But their methods of mothering, though they stem from the same natural impulse, are rather different. Angela is interested in order and cleanliness. She despairs at the dirtiness of Tarl's toilet, and at the fact that Tarl will not vote in the General Election. Both - the sublime and the ridiculous - are indications of Tarl's lack of concern for what Janet Frame would call "this world".[10] In this novel Angela is treated as sympathetically as Tarl is. Having a clean toilet and voting are virtues as much as having a dirty toilet and not voting are. Both women are immune to criticism because they are by nature mothers, a role which earns Ashton-Warner's accolade. Both women's methods of mothering are equally good, because they stem from the same attitude towards mothering.

The natural sequel of these accolades to mothering that occur in Bell Call is Mary Considine in Greenstone. She has a crippled husband so must be both breadwinner and mother in the house they live in in the bush. Despite the

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[9] Ibid., page 35.
[10] Ibid., page 24.

fact that Mrs Considine must milk the cow, chop the wood, and teach to earn money, she also has time to bear twelve children. There are not the same paeans of praise to motherhood in this novel as there are in Bell Call but Mrs Considine's actions in themselves are proof of how desirable the maternal role is.[11]

Three is the calmest and most controlled of Ashton-Warner's novels. Again her central concern is the relationship between mother and child, but in this novel that relationship is quickly being discarded by the son in favour of his relationship with his wife and his own son. The maternal role is no longer the main role for the woman who narrates the novel, and she must find new roles for herself. The mother comes from New Zealand to London to care for Julian (her son), who is recovering from an illness that nearly killed him. Her husband has just died, so the trip to London is both for physical and emotional reasons. She feels she must care for Julian because he is ill, but more importantly she is trying to find for herself the role of mother that is fast slipping away. As a widow she is even more aware of her need for another role. That she is for the course of the book occupying no role at all is obvious from the fact that she is given no name. "'I'm nameless'" she tells her daughter-in-law who has given her no name either.[12] The novel ends with the woman's return to New Zealand, leaving her son behind. The last words of the novel "I've lost you"[13] refer ostensibly to the fact that she can no longer see her son standing on the pavement.

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[11] Sylvia Ashton-Warner, Greenstone (Whitcombe & Tombs Ltd., New Zealand, 1966).
[12] Sylvia Ashton-Warner, Three (Robert Hale & Company, London/ Whitcombe & Tombs Ltd., New Zealand, 1970), page 156.
[13] Ibid., page 242.

Their more important meaning lies in her loss of him as a son. She is therefore no longer a mother, just as she is no longer a wife. Her search for new roles has not borne fruit in the course of the novel. She has rid herself of her maternal role, and now must search for some other roles for herself.

Sylvia Ashton-Warner has always been a prolific writer - her five novels came out over a period of twelve years. There has now been no novel for nine years. The loss of the maternal role for her women characters seems to have left Ashton-Warner herself at a loss as to what her women characters will do in her novels.

The relationships which Sylvia Ashton-Warner's female characters form with men are of secondary importance to those that they form with children. In the three later novels in which the women have children of their own, their relationship with any man is hardly mentioned. When Ashton-Warner's female characters are involved in relationships with men, it is always a relationship which is primarily seen in sexual terms, and in which the woman is passive and subservient. Anna Vorontosov and Germaine de Beauvais are the two women in the five novels who do not have their own children, and whose relationships with men are therefore more fully developed than are those of Tarl Prackett, Mrs Considine, or the mother in Three. The three men in Anna's life are involved with her firstly because they teach with her. Paul Vercoe and the headmaster work in the same school; Mr Abercrombie is the inspector who comes to see her teaching, and offers her support for what she is doing. The possibility is there for Anna to relate to them as colleagues, as equals. But Anna seems incapable of doing

this, and it is partly because of this inability that she finds it so difficult to have her revolutionary teaching methods accepted. The people judging her work do not see her as a serious teacher, because she does not present herself to them in that way.

To the Head, her superior at work, she relates not just as an inferior to a superior in the workplace. She compounds her inferior position - which is not inferior because she is the infant mistress and therefore has considerable standing of her own - by acting like a child before him. "Tears promise in my throat. They come easily with Mr Reardon about. Married men are so pleasant to weep to."[14] He sends her home when she has migraines; he gets her a new assistant and new rooms though she claims she does not need them. These are gifts from him, the powerful male, to her, the subservient female. As the person in control of the infant section of the school she should be consulted about what happens to it. She does not ask to be consulted, and her behaviour is so traditionally feminine that the Head does not consider it appropriate to consult her.

With Paul Vercoe, the new young assistant at the school, her behaviour is rather different, but nonetheless within the bounds of acceptable female behaviour. Paul is inferior to her both in age and in teaching experience, but he is a man. Because he is inferior she often thinks of him as her son. Watching him leave her one evening, "I stand at the gate a little longer, watching the solitary form and hearing the solitary step of the son that might have been ..."[15] However, he is also an adult male, and a very

[14] Spinster, op.cit., page 24.
[15] Ibid., page 84.

handsome one - "He is tall and young and apparently perfect."[16] So she responds to him sexually, because that is the only way she knows how to respond to men. "What can I do for you, Madame! Paul ... you can embrace me."[17] She knows that her role should be as one teacher to another, but she cannot work in that way. She can only respond to him as a man, and that response must be sexual.

To Mr Abercrombie, the sympathetic inspector, she responds as she does to the headmaster - as an inferior to a superior. He is a very tall man and Anna is often pictured looking at him from the feet up, a graphic symbol of her subservient position. His touching her is interpreted as a sexual act rather than as a greeting between equals:

> he grasps my hand and holds it most authentically. I time it for future reference. He's still got hold of it. He is actually and openly, before Sandy and the two others, holding my hand. But it's far too public to be worth anything. I withdraw it myself. If only he would do this sort of thing in the storeroom! [18]

His concern for her Anna interprets as if he were her lover. Mr Abercrombie asks after her when he meets the headmaster. Her thought is "A man asking how I am keeping".[19] He is not seen as the inspector, as her mentor, nor as someone interested in her as a teacher and creator of a reading scheme. To Anna this inquiry is from a man about a woman. She cannot see any relationship with a man in other terms.

If the reader despairs of Anna's emotional outbursts over the men in her life, and is irritated by her inability to see men in other than sexual terms, how much more annoying will Germaine de Beauvais, the protagonist of Incense to Idols, seem. Germaine is a woman for whom on her own

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[16]Ibid., page 22.
[17]Ibid., page 56.
[18]Ibid., page 219.
[19]Ibid., page 233.

admission "Men are my true habitat".[20] Of her five lovers she is most attracted to Brett Guymer, the controversial local minister. With him, however, she is least successful. His attraction lies in his possession of a soul, something that Germaine herself is lacking. One of her lovers, a musician possessed himself of a soul, tells her:

> There must be a heart in your gossamer body for your face to be shaped like one. I'll find that heart some day. If I have to tear open your body and search every corner of it, I'll find that heart some day.[21]

Though Germaine's love for Guymer is ostensibly a love of his soul, she wants him to be attracted to her physically, as all her other lovers are. When he continues to talk to her about his work instead of himself, she begins to doubt her own physical charms:

> According to the rules of people like me you should long ago have discharged your confidences. Aren't I comely enough? Don't tell me I don't dress well enough.[22]

And she lists how each of her other lovers is attracted to her by her physical abilities. Only at the end of the novel as she commits suicide on the altar of Guymer's church does she realise that she should have "burnt incense to Love" instead of burning incense to idols - the idols being her obsession with physical things.[23]

One of the messages of this novel is that men are dangerous because they distract women from their search for the inner world - a world which Germaine longs for, and recognises in Guymer, but is unable to have for herself because of her obsession with men. After Incense to Idols Ashton-Warner discards men, at least in their relationships with women. Her women characters now form their most

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[20] Incense to Idols, op.cit., page 66.
[21] Ibid., page 67.
[22] Ibid., page 168.
[23] Ibid., page 282.

valuable relationships with children, because that is a more natural relationship, and because children are also excluded from acceptable society. There is more empathy between women and children than between men and women, and the relationship is less complex.

One of the biggest mistakes Daniel Francis makes about Tarl Prackett is to see her in sexual terms. On first meeting her he is irritated by her because

> She doesn't reply to what little he says, she indicates no admiration of him and his work and shows no signs whatever of having fallen in love with him as most women should on sight. [24]

Even when he has come to know Tarl better, Daniel persists in believing that their relationship will reach its highest point if they make love. Lying on the grass next to her he senses "The trembling moment of communion, the knife-stab of realization of all she could be to him, begins registering on him physically ..."[25] Daniel has to "unlearn" all he has known about women when he meets Tarl. She is his mentor, both about art and about women. She teaches him a true vision of the world which will produce authentic art. She teaches him also that women do not have their primary relationship with men, but with children. His moment of communion with her, quoted above, is broken by the call of her son - "the electric rapport between them is at once destroyed, as so many other moments have been destroyed in the past by the presence of her children, their eternal priority in her dark heart, and as they always would be destroyed".[26] Tarl flies in the face of all Daniel's preconceived notions about women, his belief that a woman's function is to "receive the imprint of a man, to receive the

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[24] Bell Call, op.cit., page 16.
[25] Ibid., page 116.
[26] Loc.cit.

signature of his work".[27] Near the end of the novel Daniel finally realises what he does have that attracts Tarl - not his sexuality or his masculinity, but "his time, his civilization and, in the end, his mind".[28] This realisation is a natural corollary to Germaine de Beauvais' realisation that people only communicate through their souls - their minds or hearts - not through their bodies, and nowhere is this more true than in the relationships between men and women. Tarl's need of Daniel is not because he is a man, but because he is a person with mental and imaginative attributes she would like to have access to.

Tarl has already dispensed with her husband, Gavin Prackett, because he refuses to follow her in her application of the educational ideals he has taught her.[29] He is there to pay the bills and the rent and to buy the food, and to follow her wherever she chooses to go. His version of the story is somewhat different from hers, and there is some sympathy in the novel for him. He tells Daniel,

> But somebody's got to keep the family. I've got to save somehow to get them a home ... She keeps us on the move all around the world ... She has never consulted me on anything - Tarl. She announces a thing, or doesn't and does it. With no reference whatever to reason or to me.[30]

As Daniel has observed early in the novel, "Here is no material for a harmonious man-woman relationship".[31] Tarl will not be limited by the conventional restraints of being a woman. The children are her first concern and in order to do what is best for them she has to discard her husband. To be true to her vision of the world Tarl must move out of relationships with men.

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[27]Ibid., page 238.
[28]Ibid., page 298.
[29]Ibid., page 103.
[30]Ibid., page 93.
[31]Ibid., page 15.

How unimportant being a wife is becomes apparent in Three. In this novel, Ashton-Warner examines the breaking of parental and filial ties between a mother and her son. The mother has recently become a widow, but the loss of her wifely role is insignificant in comparison with the likely loss of her maternal role. Traditional man-woman relationships, such as those between wife and husband or mistress and lover, have no place in the vision of the world that Ashton-Warner's women hold. Their strongest relationship is with children, another group of outsiders whose presence in the society in which they live is considered as insignificant.

The roles in which Ashton-Warner portrays her women characters - those of mother, wife, and mistress - are those roles which alienate her women still further from a society which considers their vision of the world unacceptable because they are women. Although those roles are the ones which women are traditionally expected to occupy, they are also the ones in which women are most distant from the masculine world. The attempts that Ashton-Warner's characters make to unite the world of "raw reality" with that of the soul are made more difficult by their position as women in certain roles which are considered insignificant by the society in which they live.

PRIVATE REALITIES IN SYLVIA ASHTON-WARNER'S NOVELS

Ashton-Warner's intention is to construct a vision of the world in which "this world" can be united with "that world". The first three novels are her attempt to make this union. In Spinster she writes of "that world"; in

Incense to Idols of "this world"; and in Bell Call, through the character of Tarl Prackett, she achieves the synthesis she has been seeking. Out of this synthesis come her two later novels: Greenstone which is a fantasy, and Three which is of all her novels most firmly grounded in what Ashton-Warner sees as reality.

Anna Vorontosov, the protagonist of Spinster, is a person with "no top layer to my mind".[32] A significant part of her life is spent in the infant school room which she sees as the world of "raw reality".[33] In order that Anna may survive this contact with the real world she drinks brandy to provide her with a sort of surrogate top layer.

> More and more I learn to see what a top layer can be. You can bear more. The encloistered soul may sally without risk. It is sheltered: it is buffered.[34]

For Anna the authentic world is that "world behind my eyes",[35] the subjective inner world.

Despite this, Anna needs the outer world, both to keep the inner world safe, and because it is for the outer world that the inner exists. Unlike Frame's characters she does not want to have to choose between the two worlds. What she creates in the inner world - her music and her Maori text books - must have recognition in the outer world. She creates her reading scheme out of her appreciation of the inner worlds of her pupils. Watching herself talk with her children one rainy school day, she thinks:

> And more and more as I talk with them I sense hidden in this converse some kind of key. A kind of high-above nebulous meaning that I cannot identify ... And somewhere, not very high above me now, and not too far out of reach ... *a key*.[36]

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[32] Spinster, op.cit., page 85.
[33] Ibid., page 16.
[34] Ibid., page 14.
[35] Ibid., page 98.
[36] Ibid., pages 71-72.

The key comes to her later, when she writes the word "kiss" for a child. The child responds in the following way: "A strange excitement comes over him. He smirks, then laughs outright, says it again, then tugs at Patchy nearby. 'That's "kiss"', he says emotionally."[37] There is a sudden upsurge in reading in the classroom after this and Anna realises that the word "kiss" is "the caption of a mighty instinct: sex".[38] This is the key - the world of the children's emotions - which will open up reading for them. Reading is a physical and emotional act, and by recognising this, Anna has indeed found the key. What she has also found is something that is important to Ashton-Warner's ideas about the inner and outer worlds: that the two mutually enrich each other and should not therefore be separated.

Anna's concern about her own grading and about the acceptance of her reading books stem not from a desire for fame, but from a desire to have everyone else realise what she has discovered - the necessity of the physical world to meet with the emotional and imaginative world. She thinks she has achieved this wish when Mr Abercrombie accepts her books. She watches him read them and reflects that "Selah and reality meet with the hand upon Ihaka".[39] Selah is the small room where Anna plays the piano and writes her reading books. It is the physical space which represents that world behind her eyes. She thinks that Mr Abercrombie has united the two worlds, but she is soon disillusioned. There is much acclaim for what she has done, but no official recognition. What she has done - tapped the emotional and imaginative world and indicated its necessity to the physical

[37] Ibid., page 181.
[38] Ibid., page 182.
[39] Ibid., page 251.

world - is too revolutionary for a country like New Zealand which values mediocrity above all. "Mediocrity means everything to them", reflects Anna when she thinks her vision is going to be accepted.[40] She is right in the end, because mediocrity does win, and one more of Malfred Signal's "imaginative experts"[41] leaves the country.

Germaine de Beauvais is Anna Vorontosov's spiritual opposite. She is a woman, on her own admission, with no soul. She is afraid of her love for Brett Guymer because it stirs in her "what others call a 'soul'". It is this "intangible elusive necessity" that she has been told has made her piano playing less than perfect. "I have just not known what it is." Just as Anna realises that the world of reality is necessary for her survival, Germaine knows that the world of the soul is necessary for her.[42] She learns too late how necessary it is, because she commits suicide only when such a need in her becomes really apparent.

Anna is often associated with flowers or with children - both natural objects. Germaine is compared to mechanical objects, so that her lack of soul becomes more apparent. Her clothes, for example, are seen in terms of rockets: "I paint my mouth with ballistic lipstick, perfume my hair, ease myself in the tubular suit with the radioactive line ..."[43] The cocktail she has to drink to make her strong enough to get to church - brandy in this case providing the soul that is missing - she labels the Rocket. While Anna is seen in her small room, Selah, or with a roomful of children, Germaine is most often associated with her car - a mechanical object - which she drives fast, drunkenly and dangerously. Reviewing

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[40] Ibid., page 256.
[41] Janet Frame, A State of Siege (Pegasus, Christchurch, 1967), page 72.
[42] Incense to Idols, op.cit., page 76.
[43] Ibid., page 7.

the novel, Paul Day condemned Germaine as "a preposterous series of bogus attitudes, a magazine-reader's fantasy of high fashion, sophistication and sin".[44] This is how Germaine is meant to be, and she is intended this way for certain thematic reasons, reasons which perhaps only become obvious when one sees Ashton-Warner's first three novels as a sequence. A person without a soul must be empty. However, the physical reality that Germaine represents is necessary to complement the inner reality of the soul. Ashton-Warner does find it more difficult to make her point about the union of the inner and outer worlds in this novel than she did in Spinster. What Germaine represents is perhaps best explained by Leon, her music teacher, himself an artist, and one of her lovers:

> brilliance of imagery may carry an artist off into another world, a lonely and fearful world in which we are cut off from the mainstream of reality. We hear other voices speaking and see other faces; another life altogether flashes. Asylums are full of people whose brilliant imagery has carried them off for ever, and famous tombs are full of those who manage to get back over the border with their booty. The physical life, the bodily touch, the real fleshed union is the way back over the border.

Leon tells Germaine at the end of this explanation: "'Where would I be without you my heart; in the asylum probably.'"[45]

The necessity of the physical world to the imaginative world, and of the imaginative world to the physical world, becomes most clear in Bell Call. In Tarl Prackett, Ashton-Warner has combined the two parts of the one whole which Anna and Germaine represent. Like Anna and Germaine, Tarl is an artist, a painter. There is not a great deal of discussion of Tarl's art in the novel. What is discussed

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[44] Paul Day, "Review of Incense to Idols" in Landfall, Vol.15, No.1, March 1961, page 91.

[45] Incense to Idols, op.cit., pages 170-171.

more is Daniel's novel that he is writing. He does not succeed with it because, unlike Tarl, he does not have an authentic vision of the world. He realises this when he looks at her paintings and sees that "what her brushes ... have had to say on the intricate nuances of nature is much what his own words would have said had he her vision".[46] The nature of Daniel's vision is explained when he sits down to write his book, a novel which is an exorcism of the grief and pain he feels about his wife's death. When he writes "He and his spirit [are] alone together in sentimental solitude". He finds a track to "the other world of fluid imagery". He crosses a border between "reality and the exhilarating territory of the imagination ..."[47]

Prolonged contact with the Prackett family, and especially with Tarl, makes Daniel realise how inauthentic his vision of the world is, and how poor a work of art his novel will be as a result. So he buries the novel in his compost bin, a suitable place because one of the most important things Tarl has taught him is to see nature in its various forms. The burying of the novel is "just one more casualty from the collision with reality".[48] The reality that Tarl represents is not conventional reality, and this is made quite clear when Daniel first meets her. He notices in her face "the pallor of one under the strain of all those who determine to walk counter to the common".[49] Her reality is a combination of her inner and outer world, so that she has unusual access to the world of the imagination, and to the physical world. It is the combination of these two worlds, so rarely achieved, that make her vision

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[46] Bell Call, op.cit., page 247.
[47] Ibid., page 31.
[48] Ibid., page 228.
[49] Ibid., page 15.

of the world uncommon, and which makes her such a valuable mentor for Daniel, who has become locked away in the world of imagery.

The synthesis that is achieved in Bell Call between the inner and the outer worlds leads to much calmer and more controlled novels. Greenstone is a fantasy, almost a self-indulgent fantasy, about a large family who live in the bush. Their isolation from conventional society is a symbol of their imaginative isolation. They talk about people who live "out in the world",[50] thus indicating their separation from reality. Looked at as part of Ashton-Warner's whole fictional output, Greenstone seems to be her last temptation by a world with which she has always had an enormous affinity - the world of the imagination which creates fantasy of this kind.

Three is really the natural successor of Bell Call, because in this novel we have the union of the inner and outer worlds, but presented through a sympathetic character. No reader would call Tarl Prackett a sympathetic character, and that is one of the strengths of Ashton-Warner's portrayal of her that she makes her quite unlikeable - as people who "walk counter to the common"[51] will often be. The calmness and control which the union between outer and inner worlds gives Ashton-Warner as a writer is evidenced in her style in Three. The first three novels are characterised by what Lesley Farelly has called her "barbarically vivid" prose.[52] How her style changes between Bell Call and Three can be seen from the two following accounts. Tarl Prackett approaches Daniel's house in the following way:

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[50] Greenstone, op.cit., page 25.
[51] Bell Call, loc.cit.
[52] Lesley Farelly, Review of Three on Today's Book, November 1st, 1972.

"Soft-footed, silent-tongued, glancing alertly this way and that, both fearful and hopeful, as though they might find food of a kind, should they skilfully avoid the danger."[53] When Angelique, Julian's wife in Three arrives home, the event is described much differently even though this arrival too is full of unknown consequences, not least of which is who - wife or mother - is going to win Julian for herself: "Angelique is very late home. As I am putting on my evening meal I hear the celebrations at the door in the hall as the three of them arrive."[54]

More than she has done in previous novels, Ashton-Warner portrays emotion through metaphor in the way that Frame has always done. The increasing isolation of the mother from her son and his family is described in terms of the division of the house. When she first arrives she takes on the care of the house as if it were her own, just as she takes on her son and his care as if he were still her responsibility.[55] She soon realises that Angelique as his wife has a claim on him also.[56] The mother moves further away from her son in order that his wife may care for him. She (the mother) observes the divisions taking place in the family, and describes them in terms of the division of the house. The hallway becomes "the Generation Gap" and the lounge where they can still all meet she sees as the "Halfway House".[57] The narrative is more controlled than in any other of Ashton-Warner's novels, and it is controlled largely by this use of metaphor which subdues the impact of emotion.

In Spinster, Anna describes herself as using words in

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[53] Bell Call, op.cit., page 35.
[54] Three, op.cit., page 166.
[55] Ibid., page 22.
[56] Ibid., page 51.
[57] Ibid., page 194.

the following way: "I fling them physically with my hands and verbally with my tongue in all sorts of unnecessary directions."[58] This is an accurate description of how Ashton-Warner uses language in her first three novels. Sometimes the directions her language takes are unnecessary and hinder her communication with the reader. At other times there is a richness and diversity in her use of words that we as readers need to be exposed to.

Three is not any the less a good novel because it does lack the excitement of the other novels. It is a natural part of Ashton-Warner's fictional work, both thematically and stylistically. In it we have a clear example of what the synthesis of the inner and outer worlds means in practice. It is a novel in which there is no question about the necessity for union between the two worlds. As such it is very much a part of the writing done in the late 1960s and in the 1970s in the subjective mode. It is these novels which I examine in the next part of the thesis, and for which Three is a good introduction. More than Frame's, Ashton-Warner's fiction is an indicator of the development in the subjective novel in New Zealand. Frame has remained true to the vision that inspired her first novel. Ashton-Warner has done that too, for Anna Vorontosov makes clear the necessity of the inner to the outer world, but the development of this theme in Ashton-Warner's work is one that has been followed also by other novelists who emerged on the literary scene after Frame and Ashton-Warner.

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[58] Spinster, op.cit., page 210.

E : "THIS" WORLD AND "THAT" WORLD
- the search for self and the need for communion: the novels of Joy Cowley, Margaret Sutherland, Jean Watson, and Marilyn Duckworth's A Gap in the Spectrum.

INTRODUCTION

In the novels of these four writers the division between what Janet Frame has called "this" world - the outer, physical and public world - and "that" world - the inner world of emotion and imagination - is more muted than it is in Frame's novels or in the three earlier novels of Sylvia Ashton-Warner. The novels discussed in this section follow a similar pattern to that of Ashton-Warner's latest novel Three.

Each character in these novels sees the world in her own private and individual way. She wishes to retain that private vision, but also to live in the outer world making contact with other people. The struggle in each of these novels is to combine the two worlds without sacrificing one for the other. In most of the novels the likelihood is that the inner world will be jeopardised; very few of the characters feel that the outer physical world is likely to be lost.

The attempt to be true to the world of the emotions and the imagination while living in a world that judges that inner world to be insignificant isolates many of the characters discussed here from the community in which they live. Because of the private nature of their vision of the world they are seen as unacceptable by those around them.

Margaret Sutherland prefaces her second novel, The

Love Contract, with a quotation from R.D. Laing: "... this is the risk. There are no assurances, no guarantees."[1] It is a preface that could be appended to any of the novels discussed here. There is no certain end to the quest that these characters make, and the most that many of them can know at the end of the novel in which they appear is that there is no certainty, only a continual searching. In this respect they differ from realistic novels which portray a character's search for selfhood. In such novels the character is rewarded at least with physical goods - a desirable woman, a Rhodes scholarship, a husband - which compensate for the identity which may not have been found.

MARILYN DUCKWORTH'S A GAP IN THE SPECTRUM

Marilyn Duckworth's first novel A Gap in the Spectrum was published in 1959, and along with Owls Do Cry and Spinster confirmed a new direction in New Zealand fiction. Like the novels by Frame and Ashton-Warner, A Gap in the Spectrum is concerned with the distinction between the inner and outer worlds. Duckworth's examination of the two worlds and of the distinction between them is rather different from that of Frame and Ashton-Warner. Duckworth concludes that the desire for communion is stronger than the search for the self, and her protagonist abandons the inner world in order to live in the outer world, hoping to find her identity by contact with others. That she does not successfully do so indicates Duckworth's ambivalence about the conclusion she reaches. The awareness in Duckworth's novel of the two worlds and the distinction between them

[1]Margaret Sutherland, The Love Contract (Heinemann, Auckland, 1976).

makes her similar to the two novelists who were first published at the same time as her.

Diana Clouston, the young woman who is the protagonist of A Gap in the Spectrum, wakes up in a bed she does not recognise, in a house she does not know, in a city - London - which she remembers only as "the name of an imaginary place my sister and I had invented in our childhood".[2] Her immediate reaction is to try to find out who she is, and where she is. The first indication of her identity comes from a letter she finds in the hall addressed to herself. This is important because it makes clear straight away that Diana is going to find herself by being told who she is by other people. From this letter she learns her name, that she has come to London from New Zealand, and that she has someone waiting for her in New Zealand who loves her. So distant does all this seem, however, that Diana begins to wonder if she has "slipped into a complete new world inside my mind".[3] If she has done so, she concludes that she must be "insane".[4] This attitude to insanity is the opposite of that taken by Frame, or even by Ashton-Warner, who enters far less into the argument about the inner vision being equated with insanity. In Frame's novels the characters who live in an inner world, such as Daphne, or Milly Galbraith, never label themselves as insane or abnormal. It is others dwelling in the outer world who apply - wrongly, according to Frame - such a label. In Duckworth's novel it is the character living inside the world of her mind who considers that she might be insane. At once Diana's, and Duckworth's, fear of this inner world is apparent.

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[2]Marilyn Duckworth, A Gap in the Spectrum (Hutchinson, London, 1959), page 19.
[3]Loc.cit.
[4]Loc.cit.

In order to escape the inner world Diana leaves the small physical surroundings of the room where she has been sleeping and which symbolise this inner world to her. She goes out into the streets of London, a large physical space, indicating that Diana is going to search for her lost identity in the outer world. Throughout the novel, Duckworth uses the colour red to suggest the outer world to which Diana must become accustomed. Red is traditionally a colour associated with danger, and for some time the outer world is a painful and dangerous place for Diana. When she first sees a red bus, she is "conscious of a sharp pain in my eyes".[5] Sitting in a café, she notices a shoe-shiner with a red coat. Again her eyes hurt, but after a while "it began to fade a little. I was left instead with an impression of rawness, nakedness and exciting defencelessness."[6] This is what the outer world offers Diana, and she is prepared to give up her inner imaginary world for it. In order to find her lost self Diana reaches outward, and her trip into London is the first of many physical and emotional journeys she makes in order to find an identity for herself. When she returns home from the expedition, she cries into her pillow: "I must belong to someone. Why didn't they come and get me? ... Where were my friends?"[7]

In the days which follow she attempts to find someone to belong to. She is getting used to life in the outer world. "All the time I was noticing the recurrence of this colour - red. There seemed to be such a lot of it. It appeared to reflect in people's faces and give them a sort of positive glow."[8] This is a change from the pain the colour

[5]Ibid., page 21.
[6]Ibid., page 23.
[7]Ibid., page 25.
[8]Ibid., page 31.

first caused her, and it symbolises the changes through which Diana is going. She makes contact with relatives who establish some facets of her past for her. Through them she begins to make friends with people her own age, in particular with a young man called Stephen. Her parents arrive from New Zealand, and she feels that she is confident again in knowing who she is. Looking at a red twinset of her mother's she reflects: "I thought of my first experience of this colour and the sharp pain it had given me to look at it. Now it was a colour I was particularly fond of."[9] She is securely established in the outer world, having left behind the inner imaginary world which had tempted and frightened her.

Much of Diana's security about living in the outer world, and about the identity she has found for herself, come from her relationship with Stephen. Her path back to the outer world at the beginning of the novel was started by the letter from her fiancé in New Zealand. She rejects him along with her rejection of the inner world. But she must find someone else to replace him because it seems that much of Diana's identity is made up by the men with whom she comes into contact. That Stephen might not fill the role she wants for him quite as adequately as she imagines becomes obvious when they spend a week together in Paris. He is puzzled by her, and tells her: "I can't make you out. I wish to God you'd talk."[10] Diana cannot talk to him about herself when she is relying on him to provide a large part of her identity.

This inability of Stephen to provide her with what she wants to know about herself is largely forgotten on their

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[9]Ibid., page 103.
[10]Ibid., page 115.

return to England. They have a flat together, she gets a job in a mental hospital and he returns to teaching. Temporarily their lives are taken up with the physical details of living but then other aspects of life begin to intrude. Stephen is upset by Diana's refusal to talk to him about more than trivia; she is constantly questioning her own sanity when faced with the patients in the mental hospital. The self she thought she had found through Stephen is insecure, and the desire she has had for communion with others weakens as she realises that other people may not be able to meet her emotional needs.

Into this tenuous situation comes a girl "in the red dress". Diana immediately suspects Stephen of infidelity with her. Whether he is physically unfaithful is unimportant. What matters is that Stephen has found someone whose contact with reality - symbolised by her red dress - is greater than Diana's is. The contrast between herself and this other woman threatens both Diana's own concept of herself, and the communion she has had with Stephen. In an attempt to win him back, and to win back her own self, Diana buys a red dress. When she shows it to him, he tells her "It's a bit bright",[11] and later on remarks:

> Have you ever noticed how much red there is all around you? It's been getting on my nerves lately. I saw a woman in a sort of tomato-coloured coat today and it made me feel quite sick. [12]

Diana suddenly feels that "Stephen was moving further and further away from me".[13] He too has an inner world that presumably frightens him, and makes him unable to give Diana the kind of contact she wants with the outer world. It means that he also does not have the strength to provide the

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[11] Ibid., page 177.
[12] Loc.cit.
[13] Ibid., page 178.

identity which she hopes to find through him.

In a final effort to hold onto both Stephen and the outer world, Diana dyes her hair red.

> With red hair - if it was as red as the girl's on the packet - I couldn't return to Micald. There I would be more than a freak. I would be an impossibility. There was just no such colour in the spectrum. [14]

(Micald is the name she has given to the imaginary world from which she is trying to escape.) When she dries her hair it is "A horrible, wonderful red!"[15] She sits down to wait for Stephen's return home. The juxtaposition of the two adjectives indicates her own ambivalence about this attempt to hold onto reality. Despite this, there is a feeling that she must hold onto it no matter what, for the alternative - the loss of self, and the loss of communion with others - is too terrifying to contemplate. The conclusion of this novel is that the inner world is preferable to the outer world, but life cannot be lived in the inner world. It is better to interpret the world in a way that is acceptable to most of those who live around one, than to interpret the world in a private way and run the risk of being classified as insane. This is why Diana Clouston makes such an effort to hold onto Stephen, her link with the outer, physical world. It is also why the scenes in the mental hospital are so important to the novel, because they convince her of the correctness of her decision.

Duckworth's other three novels - The Matchbox House, A Barbarous Tongue, and Over the Fence is Out - bear out the conclusion of her first novel. In all three the lot of her women characters is difficult: Jean Dobie, living with her adulterous husband and trying to find communion with the

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[14] Ibid., page 191.
[15] Loc.cit.

children who are sent to board with her; Frieda, trying to win her lover and the father of her child away from an incestuous relationship with his sister; and Janfrey, caught in a cruel and empty marriage to a husband who is both a sadist and an adulterer. None of them, however, try to interpret the world in any other way than the one they consider will make them most acceptable to those around them. It never occurs to them to hold onto their private realities. Like Diana Clouston, they are desperate to remain in the outer world, and to become part of it. In none of these novels is the protagonist happy with her decision to remain where she is in the "real" world. One wonders if the sacrifice they make to their own identities is worth the pain that is associated. Is the real world so valuable that, in order to retain communion of some kind with others, one gives up all that is valuable in oneself, as the women in Duckworth's novels do? Perhaps Duckworth's silence for the past ten years is an indication of her own dissatisfaction with the conclusions she came to in her four novels.

THE NOVELS OF JOY COWLEY

Joy Cowley is concerned with the private and individual nature of her characters' search for identity. The search for self is made through what Patrick Evans has called "voyages into the interior".[16] Cowley's characters desire communion with others, in order that they may know fully who they are. In Cowley's novels the inner and outer worlds meet. For her and her characters there is no clear division between the two worlds as there is for Frame and her

[16]Patrick Evans, "Review of Joy Cowley's Nest in a Falling Tree", Landfall, Vol.22, No.4, December 1968, page 422.

characters.

The private and individual nature of her characters' search for identity leads them into behaviour and modes of thought and feeling that make them unacceptable to those around them. In her first two novels, Nest in a Falling Tree and Man of Straw, Cowley passes no judgement either on those who conform or those who do not. Her sympathy lies with the nonconformists, but her compassion extends to all her characters. In the later novels, Of Men and Angels and The Mandrake Root, much of the compassion is absent, and like many other subjective novelists in New Zealand Cowley is savagely critical of those who do not meet with her approval. Ironically, she asks for tolerance for her chosen characters, while refusing to give it to those whose vision of the world she considers inferior.

My discussion of Cowley's novels centers on the search for self. I examine the inner journeys of her characters, and their desire for contact with others, and the combination of the inner and outer worlds which results.

Nest in a Falling Tree

Cowley's first novel established the direction of her writing, and her place in the development of New Zealand fiction. Reviewing the novel in Landfall, Patrick Evans linked her work with that of Sylvia Ashton-Warner and Janet Frame, remarking that the work of all three was contrary to the general trend of novel writing in New Zealand.[17]

Maura Prince is a middle-aged spinster, living with her aged and querulous mother. They are locked in a world

[17]Ibid., page 421.

of their own making, which is symbolised by the house they share. "It is a big house with no room. The years have moulded it snugly about Mother and myself and now we wear it like a shell, two oysters fitted so closely together that if one moves it threatens to suffocate the other."[18] Into this self-contained world comes Percy, a teenage boy with a shock of red hair, whom the Prince women take in as a boarder. Maura thinks of his presence as a "piece of grit".[19]

Though the world that Maura and her mother share is self-contained, it is a private world that is acceptable to those around them. Most of this acceptance comes from the people they go to church with. They see Maura and her mother as holding the same religious and social ideas as themselves, and being secure in what they believe. Early in the novel Maura reveals to the reader that her world is not as certain as those around her imagine it to be. She has a private interpretation of the world that they cannot share. Cowley uses Maura's fear of rain as the symbol of her private world. The novel opens with rain: "I stand beside the window, one hand still on the catch, and wonder if there ever was a time when I didn't hate rain." Nor does the mother understand. She tells her friends Maura is "'Such an odd girl at times. I never saw anyone get so depressed in wet weather.'"[20] The two important events of the novel - Mrs Prince's death,[21] and Percy's leaving Maura[22] - happen when it is raining.

Maura's sense of her own identity is unsure. She falls in love with Percy and they become lovers. The

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[18]Joy Cowley, Nest in a Falling Tree (Secker & Warburg, London, 1967), page 14.
[19]Loc.cit.
[20]Ibid., page 10.
[21]Ibid., page 223.
[22]Ibid., pages 324-328.

affair upsets the ideas she does have of her self, and causes her to search for an identity which will include her love for him. Maura's love for Percy is linked with her love for Christ. Outwardly Maura's religious observances have made her an acceptable part of the community in which she lives. Her interpretation of religious doctrine has been a private one. Religious observance is not for her, as she imagines it is for many people, "an insurance policy". She has doubts "about everything, even my own existence ... But at least I bring my disbelief here each week."[23] Her God is a private God, created out of her own needs, doubts, and beliefs. This is her private world. It is not surprising that her love for Percy becomes part of this private world. Love of a man is an acceptable thing for a woman, but Maura has created her own interpretation of this act by loving Percy, in the same way that she has created her own interpretation of God. Percy is twenty-five years younger than her; he is suspected of being a thief,[24] and like many teenagers he is unreliable and selfish. These defects in his character would be acceptable if the difference in age between him and Maura were not so great. The uproar that surrounds the affair between Maura and Percy shows how irrational the standards of the outer world are, that they can discriminate about love on the basis of something like age.

When Maura falls in love with Percy, she confuses him in her mind with Christ. Thinking of Christ during a church service she imagines him:

> That luminous look. Pale skin drawn over the cheekbones and receding into green shadows above

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[23]Ibid., page 78.
[24]Ibid., page 67.

> the jaw, thin face, wide brow draped with auburn hair as soft as a baby's.

The reader who is suspicious that this is not a description of the conventional Christ has his suspicions confirmed by the following sentence: "He shaved twice last week ..."[25] Maura is thinking not of Christ but of Percy. Later in the novel when Percy and Maura are lovers, and Maura is feeling neighbourly pressure to end the affair and remove Percy from her house, she thinks of the persecution she and Percy are suffering as comparable with that which the crucified Christ suffered: "Red, the snow is stained bright red from the pain of the thorn and the heart that died of love." (Red is Percy's nickname because of the colour of his hair.) Maura's reason for keeping Percy in her house is the same as that for keeping Christ as a guest: "I was hungered and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger and ye took me in."[26]

Maura's love for Percy is the sign of the extent to which her interpretation of the world is a private one. Cowley indicates the private nature of her vision to the reader by having a chorus of neighbours, and Maura's mother, to provide another interpretation of the events of the novel. While Mrs Prince is in hospital, Maura and Percy become lovers. When Mrs Prince returns home, she tells Maura that Percy must leave. "'He is unsuited'" she tells Maura.[27] Initially Mrs Prince does not explain to Maura why Percy must go, but as the argument proceeds the reader, and Maura, guess that Mrs Prince knows that Maura and Percy are lovers. "'You, Maura, obsessed by the devil. Sold your soul for - for this.'"[28] Selling her soul to the devil is an unwit-

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[25]Ibid., page 77.
[26]Ibid., page 278.
[27]Ibid., page 199.
[28]Ibid., page 205.

tingly appropriate phrase in view of Maura's association of Percy with Christ. Mrs Prince has another heart attack following this argument, and is admitted to hospital where she dies soon after. No conclusion is drawn that Maura has caused her death, but there is enough suspicion there to suggest that she could have been responsible. Mrs Prince could have been right in what she said and intended to do; Maura could have been wrong. Cowley passes no judgement but leaves that to the reader.

Maura sees her neighbours who are concerned for her welfare but who also consider her behaviour as unacceptable as "three good witches",[29] a description that aptly indicates their function. Their concern for her is good, but they are also capable of making mysterious trouble for her - and in the end they do just this. They apply so much pressure to Maura to conform that she nags Percy until he wants to leave her.[30] Again, Cowley passes no judgement on this group of people whose interpretation of the events of the novel is different from Maura's.

In their love for each other, Maura and Percy live "at the edge of the world"[31] in a "noisy peace, a mad, laughing, shouting, slamming harmony that only two people on this earth could ever understand".[32] At times Maura herself senses how cut off from what most people consider the real world this world that she shares with Percy is. She tells Percy, "'Perhaps you're not real and I'm pretending.'"[33] Her justification lies in her belief that for once in her life she is doing as her inner life dictates. The trouble

[29]Ibid., page 79.
[30]Ibid., page 319.
[31]Ibid., page 131.
[32]Ibid., page 218.
[33]Ibid., page 179.

with being human, she reflects at one stage of the novel, is that "we doubt our souls and do not trust our instincts".[34] In her affair with Percy, Maura has trusted her soul and her instincts. It has not brought her approval; it may have led to her mother's death; it has brought her temporary happiness; it has not brought her security. At the end of the novel, Percy has left, and all Maura appears to have is an empty house, with the memory of her mother. To conclude that Maura returns to the situation that existed before Percy arrived, is to dismiss the importance of Maura's affair with Percy. Her sense of herself must be different because she now has the knowledge that she is strong enough to trust her instincts and her soul, to adhere to her private interpretation of the world, despite the disapproval that results. Like Malfred Signal in Janet Frame's novel A State of Siege, she is at a stage in her life when she can reach inward to herself rather than reaching outward to grab at somebody else.[35] The certainty of Maura's conviction about herself comes again from the weather at the end of the novel. When she goes to church and Percy leaves her it is threatening to rain. The rain comes when she goes home and discovers Percy gone.

> I am completely alone, the only living thing in the house, all this space bearing down on me. I am afraid ... Yet the rain locks me in. [36]

The rain continues as she searches for Percy, trying to find in his presence the security she thought she had with him, and what he represented for her. She does not find him, but she finds that he has stolen her money.

The purse has become heavy for the meaning of

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[34] Ibid., page 140.
[35] Janet Frame, A State of Siege (Pegasus, Christchurch, 1967), page 165. This novel is discussed on pages 108-109 and 118.
[36] Cowley, op.cit., page 329.

> the loss outweighs three pieces of paper and a handful of silver. It's the final goodbye ... [37]

She also finds Len, Percy's friend, whom she has always hated. He is much blunter than Maura's female neighbours and tells her: "'It's the best thing' ... 'He should have gone back months ago.'"[38] As Maura turns to go home there are "just a few drops falling from the wires overhead".[39] Maura is gaining a sense of her own identity, an identity which is enriched by her affair with Percy, and the knowledge that gives her that she can trust the life of her inner world. The few drops of rain symbolise the uncertainty that will always be present in Maura's interpretation of the world. Maura knows the extent to which her vision of the world is private, and does not meet with the approval of those around her. She will always be tempted to listen to those, like her well-meaning neighbours, who attempt to lead her to what they consider to be the right path. She will not conform, because she knows that trusting her soul and her instincts is more valuable to her. Unlike Frame's characters, Maura is not sure of the direction she is taking. Cowley's compassion and absence of judgement on any of her characters in this novel indicate her awareness that all interpretations of the world are private ones, and that conformity to any particular set of ideas or modes of behaviour is destructive.

Man of Straw

Maura Prince's search for her identity in Nest in a Falling Tree is conducted through a conventional situation -

[37] Ibid., page 334.
[38] Loc.cit.
[39] Ibid., page 335.

in which a woman is in love with a man - which through one fact becomes unacceptable. Cowley upsets the conventional expectations of women, especially of women the age that Maura is. What Cowley thinks of the expectations made of women is not made explicit in this novel, because she is prepared to tolerate most of the interpretations of the world in it.

In her second novel, Man of Straw, Cowley concerns herself more with the extent to which traditional expectations made of women thwart their development towards an identity of their own. Rosalind Jonsson, the protagonist, is thirteen, at an age when conformity is of the utmost importance. In the course of the novel she realises that conforming has two disadvantages: one is that she will lose her own identity; the other is that what she is conforming to is so irrational and painful that it is not worth the sacrifices she is going to make.

At the beginning of the novel Ros has her first period. To her this is an indication of the fact that she is becoming a woman and is no longer a child. It is a symbol to her of her acceptance into the adult world. Unfortunately, even in this event she is not like other girls.

> She wasn't like the other kids, who said it hurt like hell ... All she had was the knowledge of mystery, a strangeness that made the day as bright and unreal as a fairy-tale and a hundred years older than the day before. [40]

Her knowledge is superior to that of girls who only know of the physical pain associated with menstruation, but at this time she does not realise that. Ros would be happier to reject this knowledge of intangibles for some physical manifestation of her entry into the adult world. In the

[40] Joy Cowley, Man of Straw (1970; rpt. Sun Books, Melbourne, 1973), pages 7-8.

same way she longs for some recognition from her father that he acknowledges that she is a woman. It comes at the end of a long discussion about what shape women should be - Ros arguing for the convention that women should be slim and her father arguing that "A woman should be a woman ..."[41] His acknowledgement of her status as a woman comes only as she is leaving him, and he calls her Rosalind, instead of Ros as he has called her before. She thinks of what this change in her name means and reflects:

> This was the minute in which she had to remember everything, absorb all the feelings of the day ... so that she could take them and store them for another now, bring them out like so much buried treasure and say, This is how it was. [42]

Despite her recognition of the importance of the inner world Ros craves to be part of the outer world. She wants to be slim and beautiful, attractive to boys. Her one encounter with a boy - going to the pictures on a blind date - convinces her that craving for boys is foolish. Thinking of her first kiss she "wondered what had gone wrong, why it hadn't been good or at least interesting instead of so - so awful and sloppy".[43]

Most of Ros's illusions about her role as a woman are shattered by observing her parents, and her older sister Miranda. Miranda is engaged to be married to Colin, a teacher like herself, who is ten years older than her. Miranda is in love with the idea of getting married, but when she thinks about the wedding in any detail "the bands of gold symbolised handcuffs, the confetti a snow-drift that would bury her forever in a small room of pots and pans".[44]

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[41] Ibid., page 14.
[42] Ibid., page 15.
[43] Ibid., page 93.
[44] Ibid., page 84.

Miranda's worst fears are that she will end up like her mother - fat and frumpy and with a husband who has affairs with the neighbouring women. For this reason she does not want children because it represents "a lifetime commitment ..."[45] Yet from the last chapter to the novel, the events of which take place some time after those in the body of the novel, the reader knows that not only does Miranda have a child, but that she has two and is expecting a third. As a result she is reported by those who see her in this condition to be "Sluttish",[46] a word that the old Miranda would have hated to have used about herself.

When Miranda discovers that her father has affairs with women in each of the many towns in which the Jonsson family has lived, she ends her engagement to Colin. "She pictured her mother, and knew that, without the anaesthetic effects of the sherry, she would shudder."[47] The end of her engagement upsets Ros more than any other member of the family. Ros has placed all her faith in her own future in what Miranda is doing by getting married. When Ros dreams of her own future she dreams of being a shop assistant in a "dress shop or behind a cosmetic counter", earning enough money "so that when she turned eighteen and someone asked her to marry him, she'd be able to set up her own house".[48] Her belief in this as the ultimate goal in her life is shattered by her mother's announcement that Miranda has broken off her engagement. In this event Ros sees the truth of many other events in the novel. Though she cannot explain it, she senses the reason for Miranda's ending the engagement, and knows that her own dream of marriage and consequent happiness

[45] Ibid., page 56.
[46] Ibid., page 224.
[47] Ibid., page 175.
[48] Ibid., page 183.

is a hollow one.

She runs away from the emptiness that is left to her, an emptiness that has resulted from her trying to find her identity in the expectations of the outer world. Her inner world, that world of mystery that is hinted at in the beginning of the novel, is lost to her now, and she can see no way of recovering it. Her running away leads eventually to her death, an accident when she falls over the cliff behind the Jonsson's house. Though it is a dramatic end to a novel that is rather undramatic, it is fitting because there is nothing for Ros to cling to now the conventional expectations of womanhood have been revealed to her as hollow. How hollow they are becomes obvious from the final chapter and the information contained there about Miranda. She is integrated too far into the acceptable role of womanhood to be able to escape through her ending her engagement. She can find no other identity for herself, and so conforms to what is expected of her - marrying Colin and having children. That such a fate meets her worst expectations is apparent from the description of her in the final chapter. Ros escapes such a fate by dying, though it is an extreme measure to have to take to do so. Yet if one accepts Frame's explicit statement, and Cowley's implicit one, that the period between adolescence and middle age is the period when women are most powerless, then Ros has few alternatives open to her once she has realised the hollowness of the world which she is about to enter, and the extent to which this world will obliterate all that she considers important about herself.

Of Men and Angels

Joy Cowley's third novel, Of Men and Angels, is probably the weakest of her four books. Its weakness lies in the absence of two aspects of her writing that had been her strengths in the two earlier novels - her compassion for and lack of judgement of all her characters. In this novel Cowley makes it quite obvious which of her characters she has sympathy for, and which ideas and modes of behaviour meet with her approval. It is the novel in which her characters most closely conform with what is expected of them by the world around them. Cowley writes better of those who appear to conform but who emerge later as misfits than she does of those who do conform to acceptable modes of behaviour and thought. Cowley's own preference for one standard of behaviour in this novel is a weakness too.

The protagonist of the novel is Brenda Kent, who is in her thirties, that dangerous stage of womanhood between youth and middle age; she holds a responsible position in a chemist shop. A young and pregnant girl, Janey, comes into the shop to ask for something with which she can cause a miscarriage. Brenda will not give her anything, and later on tells the story to the woman with whom she shares a house. Kath Brannigan is a journalist, a Catholic and married but separated from an alcoholic husband. Kath insists on taking Janey into her house, and caring for her through the pregnancy. For Kath the pregnancy is a vicarious experience, because she has never had a child though she has wanted one. Juxtaposed to this situation is Brenda's affair with a vet, Murray, with whom she falls in love. Unfortunately, Murray is married to a young wife who has left him but whom he

wants to return. The wife does return, but not before Brenda has persuaded Murray into bed for one last time in order to make her pregnant, which he does. This is to be another vicarious pregnancy for Kath, who looks at the newly pregnant Brenda with "hunger in her eyes".[49]

It is at this stage in the novel that we enter what is becoming familiar Cowley territory - a situation in which a character does what she thinks is right for her without concern for what others are going to think. The difference in this novel is that the event which cuts Cowley's protagonist off from acceptable society occurs at the end of the novel, not at the beginning. We do not know, though we can imagine, what suffering Brenda has to bear because she wants to be a mother. At the end of the novel, Brenda reflects that the pregnancy makes her feel that "I am complete, I am content. I am".[50] Like Maura Prince she has done what is expected of her as a woman but she has done it in such a way that she will bring the censure of those around her upon herself. One of the strengths of Nest in a Falling Tree is the sympathetic description of the women who care for Maura without understanding why she is flying in the face of convention in loving Percy. There is no such description in Of Men and Angels because the novel does not develop that far, and the book is weaker for this omission. The reader accepts that Brenda needs to find an identity for herself by becoming a mother, as he accepts Maura's need for finding her identity through taking Percy as a lover. The difference lies in Cowley's failure in the later novel to examine the forces which will operate against Brenda's

[49] Joy Cowley, Of Men and Angels (Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1972), page 279.
[50] Ibid., page 278.

interpretation of the world which has led to her action.

The cover blurb to Of Men and Angels describes Brenda accurately as a "cheerful cynic". It is not a description that would fit either Maura Prince or Rosalind Jonsson. Both Maura and Ros are women seeking an identity which will allow them to obey the dictates of their inner world while living in an outer world which will not accept their private interpretation of it. They are reluctant to pass judgement on anyone else, if only because they wish to be treated tolerantly and compassionately themselves. Brenda does not question either her sense of herself, or her interpretation of the world; nor is her interpretation of the world seriously queried in the novel.

Apart from the differences between Maura and Ros, and Brenda, there is Cowley's own attitude to her character and the events of the novel. Of Men and Angels is didactic in a way the two earlier novels were not. In Nest in a Falling Tree and Man of Straw, Cowley traces the development of both Maura and Ros without passing any judgement of her own on what they do and think, or on what other characters do or think. Writing about Nest in a Falling Tree, J.C. Reid observed that "There is no judgement implicit or explicit, but an understanding which embraces even the selfish, yet in ways, pathetic Red."[51] The same comment could be made about Man of Straw where no judgement is passed by the author on Paul Jonsson whose sexual activities are the cause of much unhappiness for his wife and older daughter, and the indirect cause of his younger daughter's death. In Of Men and Angels there is no doubt that Brenda's interpretation of the

[51] J.C. Reid, "Joy Cowley and the Feminine Sensibility", The Literary Half-Yearly, University of Mysore, India, Vol. XIII, No.1, January 1972, page 129.

world is the right one, and there is no character or set of characters who disputes that. Furthermore, Cowley makes quite clear her approval of Brenda's and Kath's adoption of the pregnant Janey, and of Brenda's own pregnancy. Motherhood becomes an indisputably good thing, in a way that Maura's affair with Percy and Ros's attempts to be a conventional woman were not. Nor is Cowley interested in the benefits of motherhood to her particular character. She is concerned in this novel with the outward acceptance of motherhood; with the fact that being a mother wins social approval for women.

The opening chapter establishes the difference between Of Men and Angels and its predecessors. In Nest in a Falling Tree, Maura is first seen enclosed in the house with her mother, caught in a self-contained world and isolated from the rest of the world by the rain. The reader's first contact with Ros in Man of Straw is as she examines herself to see if she has changed now she is menstruating. The reader knows from the beginning that the worlds of these two novels are inward-looking, small and self-contained. Of Men and Angels opens with Brenda Kent walking to work, observing the weather, and listing newspaper headlines:

> Increase in Petrol Tax; Students' Protests; Divorce and Illegitimacy Rate; Immigrants; New Parking Penalties; Asian Flu Epidemic - all sure signs that the country is coming to grief. [52]

The reader knows then that he is in a public world, a world where the important things can be indicated in such a manner. This list is followed by Brenda's memory of a conversation she has had with Kath over abortion. Brenda's reasonable arguments on this subject are immediately put to the test by

[52]Cowley, Of Men and Angels, op.cit., page 2.

the arrival of Janey in the chemist shop asking for a pill to produce a miscarriage. The novel becomes a platform for Kath's anti-abortion stance and her belief in the sanctity of motherhood. When she and Brenda discuss taking Janey into their home, Brenda observes that "she has these outbreaks regularly, rashes of missionary zeal ..."[53] Kath talks about Janey as a "'girl who has fallen by the wayside'".[54] Motherhood becomes a political and social issue.

When Brenda decides to become pregnant she believes she is doing it in obedience to some impulse within herself. But the tenor of the novel has been such that the reader can only conclude that she is obeying ideas on motherhood that have been propagated by Kath. Brenda becomes pregnant to fill the emptiness in Kath's life, an emptiness created by Janey's having her baby, and removing her need for Kath. Brenda observes that Kath's grief over the loss of Janey will be replaced by

> some new cause, battered children, the plight of old-age pensioners, drug-addiction, perhaps a second round against abortion now that she's proved her case in the first, and within a month everything will be back to normal. [55]

Brenda gives her that new cause by providing her with a baby to care for. Though prospective motherhood gives Brenda a new sense of her own identity, it is Kath who gains most - her hunger for causes is appeased, and her desire to be needed is answered once more. Brenda is simply a vessel which fulfils what Kath wants.

Writing of the outer world is not Cowley's strength; passing judgements on the behaviour and thoughts of her

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[53] Ibid., page 58.
[54] Loc.cit.
[55] Ibid., page 256.

characters makes the novel weaker than Cowley's two previous works. Nor is she comfortable with a protagonist who until the final pages of the novel is an acceptable member of the society in which she lives.

The Mandrake Root

In Joy Cowley's fourth novel we are back in the territory that she established as her own in Nest in a Falling Tree and Man of Straw. Cowley is still prone to judgement in this novel, as she was in Of Men and Angels, and as in her third novel she prefers to make a tidy ending rather than leave the novel in a state of uncertainty which is how she ends Nest in a Falling Tree and Man of Straw.

Elizabeth Stilwell is established early in the novel as being, like Ros and Maura, cut off from acceptable society. She is also cut off from herself. This latter isolation is established by Cowley's use of pronouns - when Elizabeth talks of the self that she wants to be she refers to herself as "I"; when she talks of the self that she wishes she was not she describes herself as "you", a removal of the self from herself. On the second page of the novel the difference between the two selves and how Elizabeth feels about each is established:

> What will I do with you?
> At the airport I lost you in the crowd. You left me and I laughed with pleasure, imagining, as I always do, that this time you'd gone for good. How happy I was. For a few moments there, I was my own ... and I could feel, smell, hear, experience everything for myself, stretch like a butterfly from a chrysalis and taste the freshness of the world ...
> But you returned. ... You've taken command again and I'm the prisoner - [56]

[56] Joy Cowley, The Mandrake Root (Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1975), page 12.

The course of the novel is Elizabeth's search for "I", and the corollary of that search is to get rid of "you".

Elizabeth's search in itself cuts her off from those around her, most notably from her family. She is isolated from them already by certain actions that have occurred before the novel begins, but which affect the course of the novel. She left home at the instigation of her older brother, Harvey, who was becoming a famous pop singer. She went to live in a room above his. Her going, it is revealed later, displeased the family, who thought of her as too young to leave home.[57] Together they created a world "just the two of you in a world of colour and sound that you'd made for yourselves".[58] They become lovers, but as with Maura and Percy, whose affair is similarly unacceptable, there is no judgement passed here. The word "incest" - possibly the last taboo in the society in which they live - is never used about their love. For Elizabeth it is a secret world that they share, a world in which there is no concern for what others will think:

> And the circumstances didn't worry you, because you were brother and sister, what could happen if you were discovered. [59]

For Elizabeth "no one heard. No one saw."[60] Her family did not know of their love for each other, but they were affected by the ramifications of that love. Harvey was involved in a racket which operated strip-tease shows for business men. The building where these shows were held was raided by the police, and Harvey escaped, dying in a car accident as he fled. Elizabeth mourned the loss of a brother and a lover and after the funeral returned to the

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[57] Ibid., page 129.
[58] Ibid., page 114.
[59] Ibid., page 125.
[60] Ibid., page 114.

flat she and Harvey had shared and cut her wrists with a carving knife. The attempted suicide earned her six months in a mental asylum, and it is from there that she is returning at the beginning of the novel.

It is the attempt at suicide and the period spent in the mental asylum that worries Elizabeth's family. They find both these incidents unacceptable, and work hard to remove all traces of them from their memories and from Elizabeth's. Elizabeth knows that she must learn to accommodate Harvey's death, her attempt at suicide and the period spent in the mental asylum into her concept of herself. Without them she will not be whole. If she dismisses them, or buries them, she is dismissing or burying part of her own self. Her task is made more difficult by the attempts of her family to negate what has happened to her in the past year. There is no sympathy for the Stilwells' point of view. Yet the Stilwells, like Maura Prince's neighbours in Nest in a Falling Tree, want to rehabilitate Elizabeth into acceptable modes of behaviour and thought, even if that is done at the expense of Elizabeth's own identity. In Nest in a Falling Tree, Cowley presented the arguments of Maura's neighbours against her affair with Percy in such a way as to make the reader aware that they too had some right on their side. The Stilwell family in The Mandrake Root can do nothing right; even their good intentions mean nothing in the face of their destructive actions.

To replace the claustrophobic effects of her family, Elizabeth returns to the flat she and Harvey shared and finds there Josie, a woman who in behaviour and attitudes is the direct antithesis of her family. Josie is Elizabeth's contact in the outer world who enables her to gain strength

from her inner world. Josie accepts the fact of Elizabeth's attempt at suicide and encourages her to talk about it. She asks to look at Elizabeth's scars;[61] the Stilwell family on the other hand want Elizabeth to have plastic surgery to remove the scars, in order that she might be "normal".[62] Elizabeth knows that she must accept the attempt at suicide as part of herself. When her sister tries to discuss plastic surgery again with her, Elizabeth has an answer. She tells Pauline that the scars and what they represent are "a part of me",[63] and for this reason must not be removed. The physical symbol of the suicide is as permanent as the inner knowledge is of what has been done.

In the same way Elizabeth knows that she must accept Harvey's death as part of herself, not try to escape from it. Josie is prepared to talk of it when she first meets Elizabeth;[64] the Stilwell family hide his records in a garage, and will not have them played in the house.[65] When the Stilwells go to Harvey's grave to put flowers on it, they refuse to discuss the fact of death. Mr Stilwell tries to break off the conversation about ways of burial by suggesting afternoon tea. In the end, what Elizabeth wants to say is so offensive to them they put her out of the car, thus in their view putting the fact of death out of their minds.[66] The Stilwells' way of coping with Harvey's death is to create a mystery around the death, not letting Elizabeth know why he died in a car accident when he was a good driver. Her father tells her first that he was peddling heroin and that

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[61] Ibid., page 67.
[62] Ibid., page 154.
[63] Ibid., page 234.
[64] Ibid., page 67.
[65] Ibid., pages 47 and 59.
[66] Ibid., pages 200-201.

was why he was escaping from the police.[67] It is Josie who finally tells her that he was involved in what she calls "a girlie show".[68] The knowledge removes the last of Elizabeth's doubts about her brother's death so that she can now see the facts of that death truthfully, and thus accept the death as part of her knowledge of herself.

Elizabeth's painting gives her strength to deal with the demands made on her by her family. Even if she accepts her attempt at suicide and her brother's death, she will not have something she has created herself out of her own strength. The painting provides this for her. It is an outward sign of her inner world, as art so often is in the subjective novel. Elizabeth's family accepts her painting, glad to hold onto some aspect of her that would appear acceptable. But they do not accept what she paints; her mother wishes that she would paint "'a picture for the sitting room. Some scenery, farms or mountains. Even a seascape'd go well over the fireplace ... A nice picture.'" She dislikes Elizabeth's painting of the circus because "'no-one's going to hang them on a wall'".[69] Elizabeth has always hidden her artistic creations from her family because she was afraid of just this sort of response, a response that does not recognise that the paintings are the outward expression of the inner world that is so important to her.[70]

Josie encourages Elizabeth to enter her painting of the circus - a painting her mother has dismissed as "'terribly-horribly sinister'"[71] - into an art show. To

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[67]Ibid., page 49.
[68]Ibid., page 297.
[69]Ibid., page 100.
[70]Ibid., page 104.
[71]Ibid., page 100.

Elizabeth this painting which she did before she attempted to commit suicide has become more than paint on canvas.

> In those twenty-five weeks something has been at work injecting life into the pigment while your back was turned. People have grown in darkness, emotion fermenting under the paint like yeast in a cupboard, bubbling, frothing, seething out from what was, to make something quite different. Let there be shadows, someone said, let there be fear and pain and the brown taste of terror in those smiling mouths. Let the smell of their rot come to the surface where it can be seen. Let there be greed and hate. Let them, it said. Let there be power ... It's so strong it frightens you. [72]

In allowing it to be entered in the art show she is admitting where her own strength lies, even if at this stage she still sees the strength as something outside herself. When she looks at her painting hanging along with the others she reflects on "So many souls here nailed to the walls".[73] Though it is a mark of her own strength to allow the painting to appear in public, she is aware of how vulnerable she and the other artists are in hanging these products of their inner worlds for the entertainment and edification of all and sundry.

Her art she comes to see as part of herself, as something she alone can create, and which gives her strength when power seems to be being taken from her by her family. She tells Pete, a friend, that she is growing stronger because of her painting.

> I'm real now, I feel the things I touch and when I think my mind is quick ... I'm real because of my painting, what I do, is real. [74]

Part of Elizabeth's growing strength comes also from her ability to form new relationships. One of the most important of these, as I have indicated, is with Josie, who gives her

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[72] Ibid., pages 108-109.
[73] Ibid., page 219.
[74] Ibid., page 245.

confidence to obey the dictates of her inner world. The other important relationship she forms is with Pete, a friend of Harvey, and an ex-lover of Josie. Pete and Josie are seen as similar people by Elizabeth. Both of them are associated in her mind with nature - Josie is a botanist, and Pete works in a garden. Watching Josie go down a path Elizabeth thinks she runs "like a cow, splay-legged, hips swinging from side to side. Comfortable like a cow too, full of bovine philosophy."[75] Of Pete she thinks "Long after he has gone, the smell of his skin stays with me, a clean smell, like earth, like hay ..."[76] Such is Cowley's concession to conformity she will not allow Elizabeth to form a strong and helpful friendship with a woman. She must provide for Elizabeth a man who fulfils all the same roles as Josie but has the added advantage of being a man, and thus is able to be Elizabeth's lover. It would not be acceptable for Elizabeth to leave home to live with Josie; it is acceptable for her to leave New Zealand and go to Australia to join Pete. In Cowley's first two novels she showed no concern for providing her characters with neat endings that illustrated the extent to which their search for their own identities had also led them back into the society from which they were alienated. In The Mandrake Root Elizabeth makes a search similar to that made by Maura and Ros, but the end of her search is not uncertain as theirs is. Complete in herself, she can now set off to make a relationship that will be above all acceptable to those around her. In Australia no one will know about her affair with Harvey, just as no one will know that Pete is the father of a child he has left with its mother, Josie.

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[75]Ibid., page 123.
[76]Ibid., page 150.

Cowley's concern for neatness and conformity weakens this novel, which has until the end provided an excellent study of the search for self through a "voyage into the interior".[77] The ending is also unnecessary, in that if Elizabeth is as strong as Cowley claims she is, she should not need the insurance policy that her relationship with Pete provides. The ending negates many of the claims that Cowley has made for Elizabeth's self-discovery.

Although the Stilwell family are unsympathetic characters because of their insistence on conformity, Cowley has in her earlier novels shown that she is capable of compassion even for those she may not like and who threaten the integrity of her protagonist. The novels which do not evince such compassion are weakened by the omission. There is, of course, little compassion in Frame, but her didacticism is mitigated by the strength of her argument. Such mitigation does not occur in Cowley's novels. Without the compassion and absence of judgement that characterise the first two novels Cowley's work becomes weaker, and her vision of the world is less persuasively portrayed.

THE NOVELS OF MARGARET SUTHERLAND

Margaret Sutherland's two novels, The Fledgling and The Love Contract, follow the same pattern of development as Joy Cowley's first two novels. The protagonists of both Sutherland's novels are women who outwardly conform to and accept the roles thrust upon them because they are women, but who are struggling always to find an identity for themselves which will allow them to live in the outer world while

[77]Evans, op.cit., page 422.

keeping the inner world intact and inviolate.

The protagonist of The Fledgling is more typical of the subjective novel than is the protagonist of Sutherland's second novel. Clodagh is in her thirties, unmarried, a librarian who cares for her aged grandmother. In many respects the novel is similar to some of Cowley's both in incident and in technique. Clodagh resembles both Maura Prince and Brenda Kent in not being married; like Maura she is tied to an ageing relative; like Brenda she has a tame lover at her beck and call. Clodagh's relationship with Leo is like that between Brenda Kent and Tony Abkirk in being one of boring convenience to both parties. Like Brenda and Kath Brannigan, Clodagh takes in a pregnant teenager, whose presence upsets her own ideas about herself, and her interpretation of the world. As in The Mandrake Root, the novel is told from the point of view of two separate selves: when Clodagh is outside her house the events are seen from the point of view of an omniscient narrator and Clodagh is referred to in the third person; when Clodagh is inside her house the events of the novel are told from her point of view using the first person pronoun. What happens in her house are the things that are important to Clodagh - the relationship she has with Gillian and with Greg, her boyfriend, and what she learns from these relationships about herself. What happens outside the house - working in the library, visiting her grandmother in hospital, meeting Leo - are physical activities which are irritating intrusions into the important part of her life.

Unfortunately, many readers will only remember about this novel of Sutherland that it repeats a situation first used by Joy Cowley in a novel published two years earlier.

It is unfortunate because Sutherland's novel contains those ingredients that would have made Cowley's novel a stronger work. Sutherland displays towards her characters the compassion and absence of judgement that are characteristic of Cowley's first two novels, but which she abandoned in the later two works. Nor does Sutherland indulge in political and social comment and argument about the situations in which her characters find themselves. Clodagh takes Gillie into her house not because she wants to be a missionary and house one of life's waifs and strays, but because it seems the best thing to do. Clodagh's conscience does stir in response to the pathetic picture the pregnant Gillie makes, but it is not a conscience that is going to be always seeking to harbour lost causes. She responds to Gillie's situation in desperation rather than in any positive sense of doing good.[78] Nor does she take her in because she believes that motherhood is better than having an abortion. Debate about motherhood or abortion never enters the novel; Sutherland is dealing with a situation which is unique to those involved in it, and she does not use the situation to generalise in the way that Cowley does with a similar set of events.

While the physical facts of Clodagh's life continue - going to work at the circulation desk of the town's library, chatting with her colleagues there, visiting her grandmother, and meeting Leo to have a meal or see a film - certain important emotional changes are being made as a result of her contact with Gillie and Greg, and as a result of experiencing a pregnancy even if only vicariously,

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[78]Margaret Sutherland, The Fledgling (Heinemann, Auckland, 1974), page 14.

When Gillie comes to live with Clodagh, Clodagh has new roles thrust upon her. She acts as a mother towards Gillie, and also as a nurse, encouraging her to eat properly, do her antenatal exercises, and rest. The changes in her roles cause Clodagh to assess her concept of herself, seeking to accommodate these new roles with the old ones she already knows. In taking on new roles she loses some old ones. Her devotion to and care of Gillie means that she loses Leo who resents the lack of attention he has been used to. He tells her as they separate:

> There's always someone else ... more important, you see. I'm nothing out of the ordinary. But you have to feel you come first, with one person. [79]

At the end of the novel there is a possibility that she will return to Leo, but the novel does not end on certainty. Gillie gives Clodagh a letter Leo has left for her, and asks her if she will reply to it. "I don't know, I said."[80] She has learnt new things about herself that make her doubt the wisdom of going back to where she was emotionally before Gillie and Greg came to live with her.

The most disturbing aspect of Clodagh's relationship with Gillie and Greg is Greg's making a pass at her during a party they hold.[81] Clodagh has been able to handle the changes in herself that the new roles of caring for Gillie and then her baby have required of her. Sexual overtures from a man much younger than she is are outside her knowledge of herself. She suddenly realises that she has not merely exchanged one set of roles for another, but that in changing the roles she occupies she must also renew and refresh her knowledge of her inner self.

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[79] Ibid., page 139.
[80] Ibid., page 176.
[81] Ibid., pages 160-161.

To find that new self Clodagh makes a physical journey, a symbol of the emotional journey she must make. She takes Shane, Gillie's baby, and drives to the home she lived in as a child. As she reaches the place she smells "the scent of homecoming".[82] The place is deserted and rundown. She seeks knowledge of the settlement in which her childhood home is located, but can find none. Very quickly the demands of the child make her return to her present home. She has found nothing of a physical nature in her homecoming to the scene of her childhood, but she knows that in terms of her emotional and imaginative life the trip has been the right thing to do.

> She knew there had been an impelling conviction behind her action, a rightness and belief of the kind that once made martyrs of peasant girls. [83]

She returns home and goes straight to bed. "She felt unburdened when she woke, and could not have said why."[84] She has returned to her past seeking reassurance there, and has found it. She now has the strength to handle what is demanded of her emotionally in her present life. This strength enables her to send Gillie, Greg and the baby off to their own separate lives without regret. Clodagh is now sure of her own ability to handle change in her life, especially change which affects her important inner life. She is not sure what she will do now, what dictates of that inner world she will obey, but she is able to handle the uncertainty. She knows that self which was enriched by the relationship with Gillie, her baby, and Greg. She does not know the whole sum of her identity, but she is not worried by the uncertainty. There are no definite answers in the world of Sutherland's novels; all her characters can be sure

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[82] Ibid., page 165.
[83] Ibid., page 171.
[84] Loc.cit.

of is their own ability to manage emotional and imaginative changes, and to realise such changes for the richness they add to their inner lives.

Kate Goodman is the most ordinary protagonist of any subjective novel written in New Zealand. Sutherland makes her ordinary with the purpose of exposing the extraordinary below the surface of the conforming exterior. Unfortunately, she becomes so involved in her descriptions of life in a new subdivision that she does not allow herself to develop the inner world of Kate's which would distinguish her from those around her. Kate and Rex Goodman marry, settle in the new suburb of Comfrey, and have babies. Sutherland gives us the statistics of child production, jobs held, and educational qualifications attained by those who live in this suburb.[85] The reader presumes that the life behind those statistics is to be revealed in the course of the novel, but rather too long is spent laying the scene. Sutherland never quite manages to dispel the notion which she creates at the beginning of the novel that she is dealing with a case study. Nor does she manage to convey the boredom of life in the suburbs without making her account of that life boring.

In amongst nappies, pots and pans, visits by her mother, and cultivating a new garden, Kate Goodman is trying to find out who she is. She knows that the roles of mother, wife and dutiful daughter that have been thrust upon her are not the sum of her being. Her husband proves unsatisfactory in assisting this search, not because he is unsympathetic but because he too does not know who he is.[86] Sutherland's

[85]Sutherland, The Love Contract, op.cit., pages 10-12.
[86]Ibid., page 41.

sympathy towards a man is unusual in this mode of fiction, and it is unfortunate that she does not develop her portrayal of Rex further to provide a more balanced picture than is presented here.

Nor does Kate's mother provide her with any assistance. Kate reflects on her childhood:

> Raised in an atmosphere of orderly routine and unquestioned affection, she had been offered no encouragement in the matter of independence. While she loved her children, Marjorie Hope had not understood their impulses towards self-discovery ... She tried to form her children's views as she formed their growing bodies with balanced meals and suitably warm dress. It was her belief that life went along better for all concerned without too much analysis, too many questions asked. [87]

Finding no reassurance from those around her, Kate reaches outward, forming new relationships in a hope of finding through them who she is. Through an interest in music she makes friends with a neighbour, Bethany.

> ... they did nothing at all, except support each other and encourage, perform the small services of friendship, grow warm in mutual company. [88]

The relationship is broken by Bethany's fear that it will become sexual, that they will run the risk of being unacceptable because people will think they are lesbians. Such an interpretation of their relationship has never occurred to Kate; when their friendship is destroyed in this way, she weeps. Her grief is as much for the end of a relationship she found valuable as it is for the end of her innocence. She tells Rex "It's hard when people can't love", and cried "for the bleak and difficult distances between people".[89]

Like many other characters in novels which concentrate

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[87] Ibid., page 27.
[88] Ibid., page 126.
[89] Ibid., page 140.

on the inner rather than the outer world, Kate turns to art hoping that in her painting and piano playing she might discover who she is. She explains her learning the piano again with the reason that she might be able to teach. But she knows there is no reason for the "impulse" which is persuading her to learn music again.

> Kate had not yet cut herself free from outside opinion, and people expected reasons, somehow. They would have eyed her oddly had she said, with truth, 'I don't know who or what I am and I need to express one intangible through another.' [90]

In the same way Kate longs to paint but is afraid that there is no use for it. At a kindergarten session she has "a sudden longing to make something". With her fingers and hands she paints

> a strange primeval forest of sinister trunks and bats and red-eyed glaring beasts; the sky ominous, purple; and in the centre of the dismal place a child in a lightened, limey patch, around her circled protectively all kinds of domestic, friendly creatures; rabbits, hinds and squirrels holding out nuts in offering. [91]

Kate feels guilty for what she has done. Her guilt is not so much for her painting as for allowing herself to do something that reveals her inner world to those around her. When a neighbour asks her about her talent she suggests Kate take a part-time job using her ability. Kate dismisses the suggestion saying she is not good enough. The real reason is that the painting is important to her not as a way of earning commendation in the outer world, but as a means of self-discovery.

In an affair with Will, a man she meets through illustrating books, Kate hopes to discover an identity for herself. Though there is not the same sadness in this

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[90] Ibid., page 119.
[91] Ibid., page 110.

relationship as there had been with Bethany, Kate knows that once they have made love "all they had to say was said; ... there was no further way they might yet explore together."[92]

Then there is only Rex her husband, and her children. She comes to him in her confusion, and he turns to her in his. When she asks him what he wants for them, he can only tell her that he does not want guarantees.[93] There is no certainty, only the knowledge that, as the preface to the novel indicates, "There are no assurances, no guarantees". The absence of assurances and guarantees is characteristic of Sutherland's fiction, and of most subjective fiction.

THE NOVELS OF JEAN WATSON: STAND IN THE RAIN AND THE BALLOON WATCHERS

Like the other novels examined in this section of the thesis, these two novels are concerned with the depiction of their protagonists' search for an identity. Sarah, the protagonist of Watson's first novel, Stand in the Rain, conducts her search in the outer world, following many of the patterns of such an exercise which have been established in the realistic novel. This novel is distinguished from most realistic novels of this kind by being about a woman, one of the reasons no doubt for its fame and infamy when it was published in 1965. It appears that it is quite acceptable for young men to reach manhood by conquering the country and the women who live in it, but not as acceptable for a young woman to behave in the same way. Sarah's quest is also different from a similar quest undertaken by characters like Nick Flinders in Maurice Shadbolt's Among the Cinders,[94]

[92]Ibid., page 213.
[93]Ibid., page 227.
[94]Nick Flinders' quest is examined on pages 42-45.

in that there are no certainties at the end of the novel, which does not mark the end of Sarah's search. The end of Among the Cinders marks the end of Nick's search; the identity he has then is the identity he expects to have for ever after. Though Sarah admits to being happy and content with what she and Abungus have at the end of Stand in the Rain, she is still uncertain.

> It is hard to explain what I want to be and do and belong to, something that I cannot put into words, and if someone else puts it into words for me I say, 'No, not quite that.' [95]

Jean Watson dedicates the novel to "Chance and Circumstance",[96] a sure indication of her knowledge that there are "no assurances, no guarantees".[97] Many reviewers missed the point as to what Stand in the Rain is about. To see it as a novel about a female rebel or drop-out is to see only its surfaces. The novel is deceptive in that its surface resembles the surfaces of most realistic novels. It is easy not to look below those familiar details, and see that Watson is writing more than an "amoral tale of young love",[98] or a female version of Barry Crump's novels.[99] The changes Watson has made in the stereotypes should indicate that her purpose is more serious than to merely "strike a blow for women's rights, in this case the right to be a dag ..."[100]

Sarah's search for her identity, a search the end of which has not been reached at the novel's end, is made mainly through her relationship with Abungus. This is the central relationship of the novel but both Abungus and Sarah

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[95] Jean Watson, Stand in the Rain (Pegasus, Christchurch, 1965), page 149.
[96] Ibid., page 8.
[97] Sutherland, The Love Contract, op.cit., preface.
[98] Publishers' blurb to Stand in the Rain.
[99] Review of Stand in the Rain, New Zealand Herald, October 9th, 1965.
[100] David Hall, Review of Stand in the Rain, Listener, November 12th, 1965.

have other friends. The economy of Watson's style does not allow her to develop anything other than the Sarah-Abungus relationship, but enough other people move in and out of the novel to indicate that both people relate to others in ways they consider valuable.

Watson's intentions in Stand in the Rain become clearer from her second novel, The Balloon Watchers. In this novel Watson treats the same themes of the search for selfhood and the need for communion with others, that she had dealt with in Stand in the Rain, but her method is quite different. Stand in the Rain used the narrative form of the realistic novel. The Balloon Watchers is an allegorical rendering of the themes that had concerned Watson in her earlier novel. On the surface, The Balloon Watchers is a novel about a spinster who has a boring job wrapping stationery supplies for a big firm, and who joins a group of people in a park who watch balloons. The realistic level of Deidre Pining's life is acutely observed - the tedium of the job, and the destruction of the parts of Wellington through which she travels to and from work. The act of watching the balloons and becoming involved in a group of people who are interested in the same activity is also real enough. But the activity is more than just a physical one. Deidre tries to encourage one of her colleagues at work to join the group.

> 'I never get time for anything much. I belong to the cake club as it is. I have to miss a lot of the meetings too', she sighed.
> If only there was some way I could explain to her, if only she knew - and how *could* she mention her silly old cake club in the same breath as balloon watching. [101]

[101] Jean Watson, The Balloon Watchers (The Dunmore Press, Palmerston North, 1975), page 54.

From the first time that Deidre sees the balloon watching crowd they are established as something unusual. Though she sees them for the first time, she is told by a friend that they have "been going for ever just about".[102] As Deidre watches she notices that many people going by do not see a girl who is putting up rope around the watchers.[103] Some kind of perception other than the merely physical is needed to see the balloon watchers and their balloons.

As Deidre becomes more involved in the activities of the balloon watchers, she begins to see other aspects of her life in a new light. There are two Deidres - the one who is becoming a balloon watcher, and the other self who has been discarded. As Deidre becomes more confident about her identity as a balloon watcher she can face the old Deidre whose presence she had hidden away from herself. At no time does she admit that the other Deidre has anything to do with the present Deidre; she refers to the other Deidre as her flatmate. The first time Deidre receives a balloon she goes home to "tidy up a bit, throw out the things I don't really need".[104] She is very annoyed to find that most of the mess belongs to her ex-flatmate. The reader gradually becomes aware that this ex-flatmate is Deidre herself, a Deidre that the present one does not wish to identify. Some of the mess she sorts through is letters to "Dee" from Rupert.[105] Deidre does not accept them as her own, but the revelations of the letters make her wonder *"what there was in my life before balloons"*.[106] In another case she finds "a damp bib ..."

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[102]Ibid., page 11.
[103]Ibid., page 13.
[104]Ibid., page 30.
[105]The letters appear on pages 47, 56, 57, 63 and 64.
[106]Ibid., page 58.

> And then this worn old pair of black slacks and this old woollen jersey full of holes and all hung about with safety pins, the pink and blue sort that are used for babies' napkins.

It all smells of "spilt milk".[107] Deidre is upset by the presence of a neighbour with a small baby dressed in identical clothes to those she finds in the case. The woman, claims Deidre, keeps her awake at night with her crying.[108] Deidre is being haunted by her own past. With the strength that being a member of another group gives her, she is able to sort through this mess from her past. Then she throws it all away. By throwing it away she makes light in her flat, because she uncovers a window.[109] The light is a symbol of the light created in her perceptions of the world around her because she has come to terms with her old identity, has got rid of it, and has been able to do this because of her new identity, which has been acquired through being a member of the balloon watching group.

Deidre can acknowledge her own past because she is secure in the present. She has contact with other people, and through this contact has confidence in herself and her perceptions of the world. Noticing a sign that has printed on it "NO STOPPING AT ALL TIMES", Deidre laughs and thinks to herself "'You're just so right, friend! ... There's NO stopping.'"[110] Her ability to see things that are not visible to everyone, and her knowledge of herself will not be stopped. There is certainty of a kind in this novel, but it is not the certainty that comes from belonging to an acceptable part of society. The balloon watchers as Deidre has observed are rather different from the cake club. Deidre's confidence about her vision of the world is a rather

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[107]Ibid., page 64.
[108]Ibid., page 65.
[109]Ibid., page 86.
[110]Ibid., page 96.

gentler, less didactic version of the confidence some of Frame's characters have about their vision of the world. Deidre does not concern herself with the limited vision of those who do not see as she does; she is happy to be part of a group that does see more than what is visible to the physical eye.

Exclusion from those parts of life considered important by the society in which they live causes women to create other realities, in which their experiences of the world are accepted as significant. These realities are private to each individual; the worlds in which the women of these novels live the important parts of their lives are worlds which are inward-looking, concerned with emotion and imagination. They seek always for a sense of their own selves which will allow them to live in the outer world while keeping the inner world intact.

PART II : THE MAORI VISION

INTRODUCTION

The exclusion of the Maori vision of the world from the dominant literary tradition of the realistic novel in New Zealand is a comparatively well-documented and well-recognised fact in a way that the similar exclusion of the female vision from the realistic novel is not. The documentation is by no means large - Bill Pearson's long and comprehensive essay "The Maori and Literature 1938-1965"[1] is the only substantial contribution to any discussion of how Maoris have been treated in New Zealand fiction, and how Maoris write of their own experiences. The conclusions that Pearson reaches in that essay - that European writers have misrepresented Maori experience in a number of ways[2] and that (in 1969) there was hope for a Maori novelist who would write as Hone Tuwhare has done in his poetry "without alteration of values for an audience both Maori and European"[3] - have been echoed by other (European) writers writing about the fictional treatment of Maoris in New Zealand.[4]

The literary attention which has been paid to writing about Maoris and to Maori writing imposes a burden on Maoris who wish to write. They are aware both through the fiction itself and through discussions of that fiction of the ways in which Maoris have been described. Patricia Grace,

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[1]Bill Pearson, "The Maori and Literature 1938-1965" (1969; rpt. Wystan Curnow, ed., Essays on New Zealand Literature, Heinemann, Auckland, 1973).
[2]Ibid., page 121.
[3]Ibid., page 137.
[4]See, for example, M.H. Holcroft, Islands of Innocence (A.H. & A.W. Reed, Wellington, 1964), page 62.

writing of "The Maori in Literature", says "there is a greater need for Maoris to be writing about Maori things, in order that old stereotypes may be broken down, and in order that a Maori standpoint can be taken".[5] There is no woman writer in New Zealand who has asserted that her role is to rectify the imbalanced picture of women that is presented in most New Zealand fiction. Maori writers are conscious both that they are Maori and that most of what they write of will be seen as Maori experience. It appears from what Patricia Grace and Witi Ihimaera have to say about their fiction that they do not wish for a different situation.[6] Some of the limitations of the fiction of these two novelists stem, however, from the self-conscious nature of their writing.

Both Grace and Ihimaera are concerned with what Ihimaera has called "the landscapes of the heart ..."[7] Yet like many of the women novelists their loyalties are divided. They do not have total allegiance to "that" world in the way that Janet Frame does. The position they take is more similar to that taken by Robin Hyde than the one taken by a novelist such as Joy Cowley. Cowley wishes for a situation in which her characters can live in the outer world while keeping the vision of the inner world inviolate. Hyde too wishes to keep the inner world of Eliza Hannay and Wednesday Gilfillan intact, but she is tempted away from that world by aspects of the outer world which she feels she must write about. This is particularly evident in her discussions of women's position in society.[8] Grace and Ihimaera move away

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[5]Patricia Grace, "The Maori in Literature" in Michael King, ed. Tihe Mauri Ora (Methuen, New Zealand, 1978), page 80.
[6]Grace, ibid., and Witi Ihimaera, "The Maori in Literature" in King, ed., op.cit., pages 84-85.
[7]Ihimaera, op.cit., page 84.
[8]For a discussion of Hyde's examination of the position of women, see pages 92-96.

from the "landscapes of the heart", not so that they may prove that their characters can live in the physical world while keeping the vision of the inner world complete, but so that they may make political and social pronouncements on the position of the Maori in the society in which he or she lives. As Janet Frame shows us, particularly in a novel like Intensive Care, the situation in which the characters of subjective novels find themselves is a result of political and social forces. Frame also makes apparent, however, that exposing these political and social forces as irrational and dangerous is not always best done by didactic or realistic writing.

European writing about Maoris has shown little concern for their inner life, just as writing in the realistic tradition has shown little interest in anything other than the physical lives of women. When Maori writers wish to convey their experiences and perceptions of the world, it is not surprising that they avoid a literary form that has served them ill. They use the patterns of the subjective novel because it is a different literary form. The interest of the subjective novel lies in the inner world, where the arbitrary divisions imposed by race and sex have no place. For this reason it is particularly appropriate to novelists who wish to write of experiences considered insignificant in the realistic novel.

In this section of the thesis I discuss the three novels written by Maori writers: Witi Ihimaera's two novels, Tangi and Whanau, and Patricia Grace's novel, Mutuwhenua. Both Tangi and Mutuwhenua follow to a large extent the patterns of the subjective novel; Whanau uses the form and the patterns of the realistic novel and in doing so conforms

to all the stereotypes about Maori life that are indicative of that mode of fiction. Whanau is a particularly good example of how inadequate the realistic novel is in dealing with experiences which it does not recognise as significant. For this reason I shall discuss Tangi and Mutuwhenua together as novels which attempt to transfigure the reality of Maori experience in a private manner. I examine Whanau as a failure to convey Maori experience because of its adherence to a novel form which is ill-equipped to deal with the experiences and perceptions of being a Maori.

TANGI AND MUTUWHENUA

The central concern of both these novels is with the search for selfhood by the protagonists, a search which is to some extent bound up with their identity as Maoris. In this respect the search is similar to that of Eliza Hannay in Robin Hyde's novel, The Godwits Fly. Eliza wants to be a woman and a poet - to accommodate both the inner and the outer world. Her definition of the outer world is narrower than the definition of that world by the characters of, for example, Cowley's and Sutherland's novels. Eliza sees herself constrained in the choices she can make because she is a woman; the characters of Cowley's and Sutherland's novels do not see themselves firstly as women, but rather as people with rather different perceptions of the world from those around them. Linda, the main character of Mutuwhenua, and Tama Mahana, the protagonist of Tangi, see their identities as being Maori identities.

The Search for Self

Mutuwhenua is more explicitly a novel about a search for selfhood than Tangi is. Linda is always conscious of herself as a Maori in a European world. She knows, and her parents know, that she cannot live in a wholly Maori world obeying only the dictates of that culture. She also knows that if she abandons the Maori world and lives as a European she will abandon an important part of herself. As a child she is aware of the position she occupies in the society in which she lives, and she makes her own attempts to cope with that situation. When she is nine an incident occurs that symbolises for her the difference between herself and other Maoris, and Europeans. She and some cousins and a European boy find a piece of greenstone on her grandfather's land. The father of the European boy says they will all share it: "It was my boy who found it ... But it's your land. There's something in it for everyone."[9] He puts the stone in his car, presumably to have it cut up and shared. The Maoris take the stone from the car, and bury it in a gully. For them it belongs to the land, and that is where it must stay. Linda feels that "part of myself is buried in that gully".[10] She is different, but as a child she is surrounded by others who share her difference.

Linda's friendship with the European girl, Margaret, accentuates the gulf that Linda feels exists between European and Maori. For a long time she and Margaret think "We're nearly twins" because they share so much.[11] The fact that "though our lives crossed in one place, our jumping off

[9]Patricia Grace, Mutuwhenua (Longman Paul, Auckland, 1978), page 7.
[10]Ibid., page 8.
[11]Ibid., page 22.

and landing points stood well apart"[12] is brought home to them when they hold a conversation about some things that have mattered to each of them. Margaret talks about a violin her father has given her, and Linda talks of the greenstone she and her cousins have found:

> Last night, she said. My father. Showed me the violin.
>
> On Sunday, I said. We found. Something.
>
> It's shiny brown, she whispered. With two cut holes, like esses facing each other.
>
> In the creek. My cousins and me, and a boy. Shaped like a big tongue, with a place for your hand. [13]

And the conversation, if one can call it that, continues in this way. They realise, though they cannot articulate, the gulf between them which this talk has revealed. Linda realises the significance of the differences between them at a school concert when Margaret plays the violin and Linda is supposed to be part of a Maori dancing group. The shock of the realisation makes Linda run home before she appears on the stage.[14] This recognition occurs at the same time that Linda gets her first period, a sign to her of becoming an adult. As an adult she must decide what she is - a Maori or a European. The sight of Margaret with her violin while she dances with the Maori group makes Linda aware of how far she is from being a European.

Despite this distance, when Linda goes to high school she changes her name from the Maori one of Ripeka to the European one of Linda.

> And after I left primary school I tried to be the person that my new name said I was, but I seemed to be confined always by the closeness of my family ... So despite the new name, new interests, new friends, my life didn't change

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[12] Loc.cit.
[13] Ibid., page 23.
[14] Ibid., pages 12-14.

> much at all. Not the way I'd hoped and imagined. But I knew it would be different once I'd left school altogether and gone away from home. Away from my parents and all their old ideas. Away from old Nanny Ripeka. From my aunties, uncles, and cousins - whose very tolerance seemed to be the greatest barrier to my finding a new self. [15]

Linda goes away once from her family, with a sports team to Christchurch. She is so homesick that she becomes physically ill. She writes to her parents but does not mention the pain the separation is causing her:

> Not mentioning how I dreaded each mealtime, choking down unwanted food, and how I pedalled to the courts each morning on May's bike exhausted from not sleeping. Wondering if he was sorry he'd let me come. Wondering if twelve days could be forever. [16]

Linda's concept of herself is not put to the test until she meets and falls in love with a European man, Graeme. Her lack of physical movement away from her home is a symbol of the lack of movement away from her original concept of herself as a Maori. Her childhood attempts to be a European are not serious, and she does not in any significant manner separate herself from her Maori heritage.

During their courtship Linda meets some criticism of the fact that Graeme is European and may not therefore understand Linda because she is Maori. But those who raise objections are easily persuaded that Graeme is sensitive to Linda's Maori heritage, and has not fallen in love with her because he believes that "our girls are a pushover".[17] Even Linda's grandmother, who puts up the most opposition to the match, is finally convinced that Graeme is the person Linda will marry. She is persuaded into sanctioning the marriage by Linda's recital of "the old names, ... the ones from the

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[15]Ibid., page 26.
[16]Ibid., page 42.
[17]Ibid., page 17.

wall and the ones before them, and the ones before that ... I continued the recitation, linking every name with every name until there were no more".[18] She believes then that Graeme will not be able to take away Linda's Maori self because the recital of the names shows how much a part of her it is.

Linda has not really been tested in her idea of herself as a Maori who can live in a European world. When she left her family for twelve days she was distraught, yet she was able to return. Now she is married she leaves her family forever, and enters a world that is dominated by European values and modes of behaviour. The physical journey that Graeme takes her on away from her family symbolises the journey that Linda must make away from her old self towards a new self that retains her Maori identity while living in a European world.

Linda is happy in the city with Graeme but she knows that something is puzzling and worrying her that she cannot talk to him about.

> I would not have told him of these thoughts and feelings even if they had been tangible enough to express at that stage. I had never forgotten my friendship with Margaret, how close we had once been, and I thought often about the things only she and I had shared. Then suddenly one day I didn't know her, and I was afraid this could happen again. [19]

Linda realises that her father has seen Graeme as "a second sanctuary" for her, a place where she would not "exchange our old way of life for the new way but would learn to be part of both, as I had already begun trying to be some years before".[20] There are two problems associated with this expectation of Graeme. One is that Graeme does not realise

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[18]Ibid., pages 100-101.
[19]Ibid., pages 120-121.
[20]Ibid., page 121.

the part he has to play; the second is that it is rather too simple a solution to the problem which being a Maori in a European world creates.

Linda begins to realise that Graeme cannot solve this dilemma for her, that she must work herself to become part of two worlds - the Maori and the European. When she becomes pregnant the things that have been worrying her reach a crisis. She knows that this child will be a child of both worlds, and that she must know who she is in order that she might teach her child its own identity. She dreams frequently of "a tall woman with a moko on her chin, a woman I didn't know, who beckoned from the corner of a room".[21] It is Linda's Maori heritage asking her to make a commitment only to that part of herself, but she knows "not to go with her". Finally, Linda writes to her parents, telling them what it is she thinks is happening to her. Her mother comes to her, telling her that what is happening to Linda "are old matters".[22] With her mother's help Linda comes out of "a long journey into the darkness".[23] Then Linda must tell Graeme of "things past and what was happening to me then, and why ... about what was in me that was buried and unchangeable and significant".[24] Until at last there is nothing more to tell, and Linda realises that "it's possible to be close, and to love, and that even with differences you can be open to knowing".[25] As a symbol of the distance Linda has travelled from her confused sense of herself, she and Graeme make a physical journey from one house to another. Linda tells him:

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[21]Ibid., page 125.
[22]Ibid., page 129.
[23]Ibid., page 132.
[24]Ibid., page 137.
[25]Ibid., page 152.

'I need to move from there.'
'But not leaving.'
'The house. Only the house.'[26]

The house she has been shut in during the crisis must be abandoned as her old self is abandoned. The use of a physical journey as a symbol of the imaginative and emotional journey a character makes is common to both the realistic and subjective novel. Linda's journey is distinguished from those which occur in realistic novels because she moves from one small space to another small space. She does not move through the countryside in order to discover herself; moving from one dwelling to another is sufficient because the important journey she is making is not the physical one, but the emotional and imaginative journey.

The simultaneous death of her father and the birth of her son enables Linda to prove that she is able to live in two worlds. She gives the son to her mother to bring up so that he, like his mother, will have "a place to stand" and in having that will have "a place to step from and to return to when that future time came".[27] Linda does not need the boy to establish her own identity, because she is sure now of who she is. Her son needs the same kind of secure base to work from that she had. Linda returns to Graeme "confidently. He had not once failed to love."[28] There may be other crises, because Graeme is not a sanctuary in the sense that he can shield Linda from herself and her concept of her own identity. His love is sufficient to give her the strength to emerge from any future "journey[s] into the darkness"[29] which may occur.

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[26]Ibid., page 137.
[27]Ibid., page 152.
[28]Ibid., page 153.
[29]Ibid., page 132.

The central action of Witi Ihimaera's first novel, Tangi, is, as the title indicates, the tangi of Rongo Mahana. The events of the novel are told from the point of view of his oldest son, Tama, who has spent four years in Wellington away from the family home in Waituhi, near Gisborne. When his father dies, Tama must make a journey home to the tangi. He must make a more important journey away from his idea of himself as a child dependent emotionally on his father, and away from the idea that he is a brown European. Like Linda in Mutuwhenua, he must acknowledge that he is a Maori, but a Maori living in a European world.

Tama remembers a race he ran with his father on a country road when he (Tama) was a child. He is running a race now but "this is a different road ... I am a night traveller and this is my journey beginning."[30] As a child Tama was led by his father who established for him his identity, just as in the physical race Tama remembers his father preceded him down the road. When Tama realised he was a Maori he asked his father "what is a Maori?" and with "fierce pride" his father recited to him the names of the seven legendary canoes. "'As long as you remember them you are a Maori' ... And if ever I was confused again all I needed to do was to recite the legendary names to calm my heart.'[31] The security of knowing that his father was always there to provide the answers to the confusion Tama might feel as a Maori in a European world enabled Tama to leave his home without any qualms. He spent four years in Wellington, four years which were "good years", but also were "drifting years ... aimless. Selfish."[32] Tama ignored his

[30]Witi Ihimaera, Tangi (Heinemann, Auckland, 1973), page 103.
[31]Ibid., page 49.
[32]Ibid., page 160.

father's plea to return to Waituhi, not believing the plea that his father needed him. For Tama his father was "timeless",[33] but now he is dead.

Tama must now decide which way his journey is to take him. Unlike Linda he faces no crisis over this choice. He returns home for the tangi, and decides to stay. The three days of the tangi are taken up with the ritual of that event. In the plane returning to Gisborne, and in the train travelling back to Wellington after the tangi to collect his belongings, Tama reflects on his father and his father's relationship with him. At no stage is there any doubt in Tama's mind that "I shall never leave Waituhi again".[34] In Mutuwhenua Linda tells her mother when she has emerged from "a long journey into the darkness"[35] that she is not sure "That there's been a choice" in which direction she should decide to lead her life.[36] Linda has been in such a critical situation that the reader finds it hard to believe that she did not feel she had some important choice to make. With Tama there is no comparable difficulty. His journey into the darkness is mapped out for him by his decision to return to Waituhi; he finds a sanctuary in the village where once his father had been his sanctuary.

Tama's decision, if one can call it that, is almost too easily made. The return to the village is explained in terms of doing what his father would have wanted him to do, but it avoids the crucial question of what Tama is going to do now he is an adult and must decide the direction of his own life. He cannot ignore the four years in Wellington by saying they were good, but selfish. Tama's past, which

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[33]Ibid., page 161.
[34]Loc.cit.
[35]Grace, loc.cit.
[36]Ibid., page 151.

involved his father, is of paramount importance to the decision which he makes. He regrets that he did not earlier make decisions on the basis of that past. Surely he will at some stage regret a decision he makes which takes no account of four years of his own life. In returning to the village, Tama is doing things "the Maori way".[37] He is a Maori, but he has also spent part of his life in a society dominated by European values and modes of behaviour. In effect, he escapes what that might mean for him and his sense of his own identity by returning to the village and his Maori self. It is hard to believe that at some later stage in Tama's life he will not face another crisis in which he will have to come to terms with that period of his life in which he saw himself as a Maori in a European world.

For both Linda and Tama the search for self is closely bound up with the search for what it means to each of them to be a Maori. The conclusion each comes to is different, but it is a conclusion based on their shared race. In this respect the journeys that Linda and Tama make and the destinations they reach differ from the journeys of the characters discussed in the chapter on the novels of Joy Cowley, Margaret Sutherland, Jean Watson and Marilyn Duckworth. Those characters saw the searches they made only in terms of themselves, and did not see what they were doing as representative of anything other than themselves. Both Tama and Linda are very conscious of their race, and of the conflict they face because they are Maoris in a world which does not recognise their vision of that world as acceptable or significant.

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[37]Ihimaera, op.cit., page 160.

Both formally and thematically Mutuwhenua and Tangi follow the patterns of the subjective novel, as I have outlined them in Section I of the thesis. In both novels the passage of time is dislocated from the strictly chronological, so that we are surrounded by Virginia Woolf's "luminous halo", rather than passing by a series of gig lamps. In Tangi the actual events of the tangi take place over three days, because this is the traditional time allowed for the ritual. The day that precedes the tangi is taken up with Tama's flight to Gisborne and his return to Waituhi; it is also taken up with Tama's memories of his father, memories which go back nearly twenty years in Tama's childhood. During the day that it takes for Tama to return to Wellington to collect his belongings he also travels backward in time a long distance to recapture memories of his life with his father. The two physical journeys that Tama makes and the ritual of the tangi impose a mechanical time scheme upon the novel, anchoring it in a way that is common in the subjective novel. The novel opens with Tama catching the train to Wellington; it closes with the memory of his father's burial. In the same way Mutuwhenua begins with Linda's wedding, which in the chronological sequence of the novel occurs half-way through, and ends with her return to Graeme after leaving her son with her mother. The chronological time covered here is longer than that covered in Tangi, but again there is a great difference between the passage of mechanical time, and the passage of time that passes in Linda's mind. She remembers incidents from her childhood that go back to when she was nine years old, and other

memories occur in the time between her ninth year and the present.

The timeless nature of the imaginative and emotional journey that Linda and Tama make is accentuated by the use of legends in both novels. The use of Maori legends in Tangi and Mutuwhenua differs from the literary and mythic references made in subjective novels which portray a European experience of the world. Both Ihimaera and Grace use Maori legends as a consistent set of referents. They assume that everyone in the culture of which they write knows the legends and their significance. For the non-Maori reader who can be expected either not to know the legend or at least not to recognise its importance, the legend is recounted and its significance to the event to which it is linked is made apparent. Both Tama and Linda see themselves in relation to the legends; the legends tell them something of their own situation.

In European New Zealand novels, legend and literature do not have the same power or significance. There is not the same sense that the culture from which and for which these novels are written shares the same set of referents. The knowledgeable reader will recognise Frame's allusions to The Tempest in Owls Do Cry, but it is only a small proportion of the society of which she writes that will have even that recognition. Even fewer readers will have the detailed knowledge necessary to follow up all the references she makes to this and other pieces of literature. Frame does not make her references explicit in the way that Grace and Ihimaera do, partly because it is more difficult to indicate subtly the relationship between what she is writing of and a piece of literature which she knows many of her readers either will

not know or will not know well. The recognition that few readers will not know the literary allusions of an author leads Gloria Rawlinson to append a series of notes to her edition of The Godwits Fly in order that Hyde's references will be clear. Joy Cowley's use of Biblical references in Nest in a Falling Tree may be clearer to the general reader than Frame's references to Shakespeare, but even she is not sure that she shares her knowledge of the Bible with all her readers. There is not in European culture in New Zealand a common set of literary and legendary referents shared by both writer and reader alike. There may not be such a set for Maori writer and reader either, but Maori writers write under the assumption that there is, and this distinguishes their use of legend in particular, from a similar usage by European writers.

The legends most frequently evoked in Tangi are, appropriately, those to do with death. The legends create a sense of timelessness about the events of the novel, in particular about the death of Rongo Mahana, and about Tama's search for an adult, Maori identity. What is happening in this novel is similar to what is happening in Mutuwhenua; the events are what Linda's mother describes as "old matters".[38] In a novel where the central concern is with death the eternal nature of the events is important. Tama is devastated by his father's death but he is comforted by the fact that the death is part of a cycle which has gone on for thousands of years. He is comforted also by the certainty which repetition of the legends provides. There is a structure, a ritual in Maori society which accommodates death in a way that does not occur in European culture.

[38]Grace, op.cit., page 128.

The legend used most often in Tangi is that about Rangitane and Papatuanuku and the beginning of the world:

> My mother was the Earth.
> My father was the Sky.
> They were Rangitane and Papatuanuku, the first parents, who clasped each other so tightly that there was no day. Their children were born into darkness. They lived among the shadows of their mother's breasts and thighs and groped in blindness among the long black strands of her hair. Until the time of separation and the dawning of the first day. [39]

Tama sees his world as beginning again and going in a different direction now that his father is dead. Though his journey is unique to him, it is also part of a larger pattern, which the reference to the legend indicates. European writers do not often suggest that they feel the same sense of eternity or universality about the patterns they use in their novels.

The legends of death assist Tama to see his father's death as part of the cycle of life. When he recalls his father teaching him the names of the seven legendary canoes so that he may know who he is as a Maori, he remembers that there was an eighth canoe:

> Its name was Karamurauriki and it brought Aitua to Aotearoa. The bow piece and the stern piece were fastened and decked with streamers of white albatross feathers. The bailer was Tataeore. Karamurauriki: the canoe of Death. [40]

Though Tama is angry with the canoe of Death at this stage because it has taken his father away, he is also comforted by the knowledge of the legends and the indication in them of the eternal nature of what is happening to him. The legend of Te Reinga serves the same purpose. Like "all Maori dead" Rongo Mahana will make his way there, to wait for the sun to set before making his journey to the land of the dead.[41] When Tama remembers this legend earlier in the novel, he

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[39] Ihimaera, op.cit., page 26.
[40] Ibid., page 49.
[41] Ibid., page 73.

wishes his father not to take the final step away from him. At the end of the novel he is so secure in his understanding of the death and of himself that he no longer grieves. The "final farewell" of the village people and the relatives is one that is "echoed by earth and sky". It is "an acclamation ... a roar of pride".[42] Death is not to be feared because it is a part of a cycle over which mankind has no control. The legends indicate this, and they are invoked in the novel to suggest the timeless nature of the events of this particular tangi.

Grace uses legends in Mutuwhenua in the same way, and she uses those legends which are appropriate to her themes. As the title indicates, the legend about Mutuwhenua, the time when the moon sleeps, is particularly important to her. Graeme, the European Linda marries, is identified with the sleeping moon. Linda wishes he were with her on the night of Mutuwhenua because she is confused by a talk she has had with her grandmother, and she wants to talk with Graeme "about all the things we hadn't had time for".[43] The identification of Graeme with the night of Mutuwhenua is made more explicit at the end of the novel. Linda has left her infant son with her mother. She reflects on the people who will influence her son, and thinks of her mother and her husband being important. She describes Graeme her husband as a man "who has never once erred. Whose soul is dark glowing black. Stainless and shining, and as pure as the night of Mutuwhenua when the moon goes underground and sleeps."[44]

Linda herself is identified with the legend of Rona, the ngaio tree, and the full moon. Linda's second name is

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[42] Ibid., page 207.
[43] Grace, op.cit., page 75.
[44] Ibid., page 152.

Ngaio. At full moon Rona went to collect water, but the moon went behind a cloud, and in the darkness Rona tripped and hurt herself. When she cursed the moon, it snatched her up. Rona caught at the branch of a ngaio tree, and she, the tree, and her containers were taken to the moon. At the full moon the tree, Rona and the containers can be seen.[45] Linda takes Graeme to a beach "which is a place where only we go and which is accessible by land only through my uncle's farm"[46] during the full moon. The trip is important to them both because they share something that neither can articulate. Graeme comes near to describing the situation when he tells Linda that "I felt properly on the outside for the first time".[47] Linda will not discuss how she felt about that day because "I was afraid to find out how far apart we might be".[48] She has shared her life with him at a time of the moon with which she is identified. At the end of the novel when Linda knows she must return to Graeme she goes confidently, "remembering that day of Rakaunui, the time when you can see the shape of the tree that Rona clutched as the moon drew her to the skies".[49]

Graeme's identification with Mutuwhenua and Linda's with Rakaunui make them parts of the same whole. Grace uses the legends of the moon to suggest that Graeme and Linda have things they share, though they are different parts of the same whole. The same point is made through the symbol of coffee cups. Linda and Graeme drink coffee in a café after he has returned from his job. Linda is apprehensive about the meeting sensing that the marriage will cause problems for her. What those problems are is symbolised by the fact that

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[45]Ibid., pages 154-155.
[46]Ibid., page 65.
[47]Ibid., page 76.
[48]Ibid., page 78.
[49]Ibid., page 153.

"Our coffee was from the same jug, only the cups were different ..."[50] In the legends and in this symbol lies the hope for Graeme and Linda to be able to live together sharing their differences.

The pattern of the relationships in Mutuwhenua is established through Grace's identifying the three main characters - Linda, Graeme and Linda's father - with trees, and relating those trees to each other. Linda, with her second name of Ngaio, is identified with the ngaio tree. When she was born, a ngaio tree was planted in the garden. At the beginning of the novel the ngaio tree is described in the following way:

> From without it has a peaceful appearance, the ngaio tree, with its tidy rounded shape and its even green. Not until you get in close to it do you discover the pained twisting of its limbs and the scarring on the patterned skin, but even so it is a quiet tree. [51]

The reader should be alerted to the fact that Linda's outer self does not reflect her inner world. He should also be alerted to the pain and suffering Linda will experience in the course of the novel. The ngaio is next to a ti kouka which had "been brought down from the bush when my father was a small boy".[52] A little later the connection between Linda's father and the ti kouka is made more explicit. The ti kouka is described as a tree "with nothing hidden". "My father", says Linda in the following paragraph, is a man "with nothing hidden".[53] The account of Linda's father in the novel bears out this assessment of him.

Like the ngaio and the ti kouka, Linda and her father are close to one another. In the garden the two trees are

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[50] Ibid., page 82.
[51] Ibid., page 1.
[52] Loc.cit.
[53] Ibid., page 16.

sheltered from the wind by "an old macrocarpa". The macrocarpa is not a native New Zealand tree as the ngaio and ti kouka are, but it is an essential part of this garden. In this respect, as an import which has a place, the tree resembles Graeme. Linda's father distrusts him at first because he is foreign. In the end he comes to recognise that Graeme is as essential to Linda's growth as the macrocarpa was to the growth of the ngaio and the ti kouka.[54]

The use of symbols in this manner is typical of subjective novels where the concern is with the inner worlds of the characters, worlds which are more clearly and more subtly described in metaphor. Grace's particular use of metaphor in this novel accentuates her assertion that what she is writing of is eternal and universal, in the way that trees are.

The other metaphor used extensively in both these novels is that of a physical journey which I have discussed in the section on Linda's and Tama's search for their identity. The physical journeys they both make - Tama's journey back to Waituhi and his return to Wellington, and Linda's journey from her home to her first house and then to her second one - are symbols of the imaginative and emotional journeys each make in the course of the novel. Physically neither of them travels very far; emotionally and imaginatively they travel vast distances. The physical journey is an indication of the inner journey; it also suggests the vastness of that journey in the comparison of the physical journey with the imaginative one. Neither Linda nor Tama needs to cover large areas of space. Linda moves from house to house; Tama moves from the confined space of a plane to

[54]Ibid., page 1.

the small area of Waituhi, and back into a railway carriage. Neither needs to cover the area of the North Island or anything similar in the way that Nick Flinders needs to, in order to discover who they are. In Tangi and Mutuwhenua it is the imaginative and emotional journey that matters, not the physical one.

Both the novels discussed here follow the forms and themes common to the subjective novel in New Zealand. Tama's and Linda's search for self differs from similar quests made by the protagonists of novels written by and about Europeans in that the self that Linda and Tama look for is a search for a Maori self. The quest is not unique to Linda and Tama alone, but is shared by the Maori culture. That in itself, however, places them outside acceptable society in New Zealand and makes their experiences and perceptions of the world insignificant. Both novels indicate the importance the authors attach to the experiences and perceptions of being Maori. In writing in the way that they do, they show also their dissatisfaction with the way the dominant tradition of New Zealand fiction attempts to convey a Maori vision of the world.

THE FAILURE OF WHANAU

In Tangi and Mutuwhenua, Ihimaera and Grace are interested in the relationship between their protagonists and the Maori culture which is an integral part of their sense of selfhood. What they experience in the course of the novel is not new, though it is new to them, and they give the experience their own interpretation. There is a sense of a collective cultural experience and interpretation of

experience in these two novels that is not evident in novels by European writers on the same or similar themes.

In his second novel, Whanau, Ihimaera attempts to capture the collective feeling of Maori experience. In order to do this, he describes the events which take place over one day in the village of Waituhi, the same village which was the focus of Tangi. The events of Whanau precede those of Tangi, and Rongo Mahana is still alive in the second novel; his son Tama, the protagonist of Tangi, does not appear at all. The day Ihimaera chooses is a Sunday, which is appropriate because most inhabitants of the village are at home, and so the feeling of a group of people can be more adequately conveyed. A large number of the people have returned late on Saturday from a wedding, and the novel opens with this return. During the novel, people go to church, get drunk, play cards, plant potatoes; an old man is lost and found at Rongopai, the decaying meeting house, the symbol of "village aroha. Family together, before the great family began to splinter apart."[55]

It is difficult to know what form of the novel Ihimaera could have used to portray the idea of "Family together" which is his main concern in this novel. In choosing the form of the realistic novel he has done his subject matter a disservice. The novel as a form has rarely, if ever, been used in English fiction to convey the experiences of a group of people. In nineteenth century fiction, where the novelist was often as interested in the society as in his or her protagonist, the focus was even so on one or two individuals operating in that society. One remembers from Middlemarch, for example, the characters of Dorothea Brooke,

[55]Witi Ihimaera, Whanau (Heinemann, Auckland, 1974), page 168.

Rosamund and Tertius Lydgate and Will Ladislaw, far better than one remembers the communities in which they lived. In the same way one is much more likely to remember John and Elsie Hogan and Andy Saunders from Dan Davin's novel Roads from Home than one is to remember Davin's evocation of the Irish-Catholic community in Southland. The subjective novel has been even more interested in the physical, emotional and imaginative experiences of one individual concentrating its attention on the world of one consciousness.

It appears that Ihimaera needed to develop some new fictional form to convey the communal nature of his subject matter. Not only does he not do that, but he uses a novel form that has consistently ignored or misrepresented the experiences that interest him. The realistic novelist in New Zealand has not been interested in Maori experience because it contributes nothing to what is considered significant and acceptable in the society on which the realistic novel concentrates. When such a novelist does interest himself or herself in Maori experience the inclination is to see that experience in certain stereotyped ways, and not to see Maori people as individuals firstly and representatives of a certain race and culture secondly. So Noel Hilliard in his sequence of novels about Netta Samuel - Maori Girl, Maori Woman, and The Glory and the Dream - is not as interested in Netta's experiences for their own sake as he is in giving fictional treatment to a certain set of statistics about Maori behaviour and experience. Thus Netta suffers discrimination over accommodation and getting a job; she is used by a pakeha and accepted by Maori men. She becomes pregnant and has her child adopted, and then becomes a woman who hangs around bars hoping for money and drinks in return for her

sexual favours. Netta is never an individual; Hilliard's interest in her is as a representative of her race and culture, especially as that race and culture conflicts with European society. Hilliard is certainly interested in Maori experience, but it is a certain *type* of Maori experience that interests him, a type that he assumes is representative of all Maori experience.

Given the kind of treatment that Maori characters have had in the realistic novel, even from writers who are sympathetic to Maori experience as Hilliard obviously is, it is strange that Ihimaera should use that form for his second novel. It is strange too when one considers his own professed aim in his writing - to "write about the landscapes of the heart"[56] - that he should use a form which has traditionally been used by novelists who are not interested in that kind of subject matter.

Ihimaera does what many realistic novelists writing of Maori experience do - he chooses a variety of Maoris to represent different types of Maori experience. Ihimaera does this to convey the collective nature of Maori experience but the form of the novel that he uses is so ill-equipped to deal with collective experience that what emerges is a series of stereotypes. What makes this stereotyping worse is that Ihimaera chooses all those stereotypes that have been used about Maoris in fiction written by Europeans. Even the reader's preconceived notions about Maoris are not destroyed by this novel.

There is the Maori who has made good in the European world, but who is not, according to Ihimaera, "a brown Pakeha".[57] When the reader first meets Hepa Walker on

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[56] Ihimaera in King, ed., loc.cit.
[57] Whanau, op.cit., page 36.

Sunday morning his thoughts are bothering him.[58] The fact that he is thinking is used by Ihimaera to give the reader a brief summary of Hepa's life, a life which has led him to enjoy the best of both Maori and Pakeha worlds. Hepa re-appears in the novel only briefly after this introduction, and he does or says nothing that will convince the sceptical reader that Hepa Walker is not a Europeanised Maori who has sold his Maori heritage for "another car, a cocktail cabinet, a few pieces of crystal and a classical record collection".[59]

Hepa Walker's two sons have chosen different directions for their lives. Frank is at university; Sam is on his own admission "a no-hoper, and ... nothing he could do would ever change that".[60] The youngest child of the family, Hana, is torn between the future offered to her by following Frank's and her father's paths, and that offered by doing what Sam has done. She is tempted by Sam's role, because she feels she does not have the strength to do what her father and Frank have done. She is first seen in the novel creeping home from a dance which she has attended without her parents' permission. As she reflects on her future she thinks "She was going to be a failure, just like Sam, and she felt ashamed."[61] She feels resentful of the pressure her father is putting on her. At the end of the novel she is sufficiently sure of herself and her future that she can tell her father, "Dad, I shall try not to hurt you".[62] There has been no development of Hana's character to indicate this tone of optimism.

Andrew Whatu, another adolescent in the village, is

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[58]Ibid., page 34.
[59]Ibid., page 36.
[60]Ibid., page 57.
[61]Ibid., page 32.
[62]Ibid., page 172.

given one chapter in which to examine the conflict that he faces. He is clever, and in love with a Pakeha girl. Both the goals offered by his intelligence and his love seem unattainable to him because he is a Maori:

> For Josephine is a Pakeha girl. To make it worse, she's brainier than Andrew and her father is rich. What possible chance has he got? His own dad is poor and Andrew himself, though intelligent, is just not in the same class as Josephine. And, of course, he is Maori. No matter that their aspirations and outlook are the same, he is Maori. No matter that they both aim at university, he is Maori. [63]

The conflict that Andrew faces is one that has been documented before. Ihimaera sheds no new light on the dilemma that faces a person like Andrew, "a Maori forcing himself against the values of a Pakeha world".[64] No more is seen of Andrew in the novel, so that the choice he must make is never examined fully. He becomes the representative of the ambitious Maori, a younger version of Hepa Walker.

The women playing cards, the drunken party, the people planting potatoes, the woman with too many children, are all representatives of a certain type of Maori behaviour, but none is developed sufficiently to allow the reader to see more than a type. Ihimaera came nearer to defining a sense of community in Tangi in his invocation of legend and his use of symbols to indicate the ties Tama had with his whole culture. That form may not have suited Ihimaera's intentions in Whanau, but the form of the realistic novel suits his aims even less.

Whanau provides a very good example of how inadequate the realistic novel is to convey the experience of being Maori. It is inadequate in form, and it is inadequate because of the ways it has been used to describe Maori

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[63] Ibid., page 66.
[64] Ibid., page 67.

experience. To break down the stereotypes of Maori portrayal which are so common in the realistic novel in New Zealand, new fictional forms need to be used. Grace and Ihimaera demonstrate the use of one of these different forms by using the subjective novel in their writing of Tangi and Mutuwhenua. The subjective novel is particularly appropriate for their writing because it concentrates on an interpretation of the world that ignores the arbitrary division imposed by race and sex. It is also appropriate in New Zealand fiction because it has become the domain of those whose experiences have been rendered as insignificant and unacceptable in the realistic novel.

PART III : THE MALE VISION

INTRODUCTION

In the realistic novel the experiences of male characters who are young, European and mentally and physically healthy are the only experiences considered either acceptable or significant. This assumption of what is acceptable and significant is shared by the society for which the novels are written, and for this reason, as we have seen, the realistic novel form has become the dominant fictional tradition in New Zealand. Novelists who do not share this assumption and wish to render as significant other experiences and perceptions of the world have chosen another fictional form - that of the subjective novel - in which to convey those experiences and perceptions. The groups excluded from the world of the realistic novel are many, but hitherto only Maoris and women have used the subjective novel form for this purpose. One would expect that such groups would write in this manner. What is unexpected is to find subjective novels written by men about masculine experiences. One can only conclude from this that even men whose experiences are supposed to be faithfully interpreted in the realistic novel do not see as authentic the accounts of masculine experience presented there.

In my introduction to the section on the Maori vision I indicated the burden that Maori writers labour under because of the expectations which readers and critics have of them as Maori writers. The burden of expectation under which men labour is far greater. The whole tradition of the

literature in which they write assumes that certain masculine experiences are shared by all men, and that those experiences are the most important ones in the society in which these men live. Men whose experiences and perceptions of the world differ from those conveyed in the realistic novel must destroy the view of the masculine world common to the realistic novel, and out of the destruction create a new vision.

The eight novels examined in this section are evidence of the burden placed upon male writers. Frank Sargeson's I Saw in my Dream and Michael Henderson's The Log of a Superfluous Son are novels in which a process of rejection is paramount. These two novels are discussed in some detail because they present so strongly the predicament faced by the five novelists whose work is examined here. Rejection of the outer physical world in which they should have a natural place because they are men dominates these two novels to the extent that neither Sargeson nor Henderson is able to offer anything more than a vague alternative to their protagonists' dilemma. Rejection of the "real" world is part of Graham Billing's The Slipway and Ian Wedde's Dick Seddon's Great Dive also. In these two novels the process of rejection is heightened by the protagonists' reliance on drugs and alcohol, a reliance which isolates them from a world in which they already see themselves to be outsiders.

The four novels of Ronald Hugh Morrieson provide a natural conclusion to my discussion of the male vision. The evidence of the novels suggests that Morrieson was a writer who was strongly attracted to the inner imaginative world but who because of his masculine conditioning was unable to ignore the outer physical world which he believed

was his domain.

The dilemma which faces the five novelists whose work is discussed here is that of finding themselves alienated from a world to which they should naturally belong. The alternative for them would seem to be the world of the imagination and the emotions which is so attractive to the women and the Maori writers. Yet these men cannot leave the world they feel belongs to them and choose life in "that world". In Morrieson's novels this conflict is made explicit when products of his imaginative world meet the real world which dominates the novels.

I SAW IN MY DREAM AND THE LOG OF A SUPERFLUOUS SON

As might be expected from the titles of these two novels, the authors are interested in their characters' inner world of emotion and imagination. Sargeson's use of the word "dream" suggests that physical reality is not his primary concern; Henderson's use of the word "log" indicates that he too wants to investigate the mind of his character, assuming that in a diary it is the record of the mental activity that is kept. The novels bear out these expectations, but the interest of both authors in the minds and imaginations of their protagonists is for rather different reasons from that of female or Maori writers in the inner worlds of their characters. Neither Henderson nor Sargeson considers the world of the mind and imagination a viable alternative to the physical world which they so strongly criticise. They are interested in the minds of their protagonists because it is there that the hypocrisies and limitations of the world in which these men live are revealed.

Henderson and Sargeson are concerned with the restrictions placed upon their protagonists by the puritan nature of the society in which they live. In particular they question the belief in hard work and the goals towards which such hard physical work is supposed to lead; they dispute the belief that sexuality is evil; they question the belief that art and artistic activity is useless because it produces nothing that can be measured in tangible ways; and they query the belief that comfort and pleasure should only occur when they have been won by hard physical effort. In examining these beliefs Henderson and Sargeson are questioning in particular the expectations about men that adherence to these values produces. Men are conditioned in such a society to work hard to earn money to keep the wife and children they acquire as symbols of their power. Their sexual desires are evil though they are expected to have a wife, and that wife is expected to bear her husband's children. In such a society men must be physically strong, cannot be weak or ill, and cannot complain or question their lot. In the realistic novel men accept and often welcome the privileges and responsibilities implied by these roles and expectations of them. In the two novels considered here, the male protagonists are aware of the burdens such privileges and responsibilities give them. They reject the roles into which they are forced. The alternative suggested is vague, however.

In the process of rejection Henderson and Sargeson resemble the three female novelists discussed briefly at the beginning of Part I - Jane Mander, Jean Devanny and Edith Searle Grossman. All three women rejected the roles and expectations placed upon their female protagonists by a

society which they saw in much the same way Sargeson and Henderson see that society. Their solutions were more concrete than those offered by Sargeson and Henderson. The women novelists still believed in the possibility of existing institutions changing to allow their female characters more freedom. Sargeson and Henderson cannot believe in the institutions changing because those institutions have been created by men, men who have been conditioned in the ways that Henderson's and Sargeson's protagonists have been conditioned. Knowing what that conditioning entails they can have no faith in the status quo changing sufficiently to allow their characters any freedom.

Both Henderson and Sargeson see the repressed nature of the society in which their protagonists grow up as diseased, and they make the connection between repression and illness explicit. Osgar Senney in Henderson's The Log of a Superfluous Son keeps his "log" in "a Sandoz diary, so each day has a medicine".[1] Osgar is sent to Nelson Boys' College as a boarder. His record of the activities of that institution are recorded in his Sandoz diary, and the records kept are accompanied by appropriate medical terms. An account of the initiation of the new boys is followed by the terms "PLEXONAL: Terreur nocturne".[2] An entry for February 22 which reports that "Every morning we have a cold shower and then practise dumb-bells" is followed by the medication "LOBELINE-SANDOZ: Asphyxia of the newborn".[3] An account of rugby practice is succeeded by the medical terms: "CALCIBRONAT: Post-concussional disorders".[4] The memories

[1]Michael Henderson, The Log of a Superfluous Son (John McIndoe, Dunedin, 1975), page 8.
[2]Ibid., page 21.
[3]Loc.cit.
[4]Ibid., page 23.

of Nelson College which are recorded here are of events that were designed to condition Osgar into being an unemotional, physically tough male equipped in body, if not in mind, to bear the responsibilities of being a man in a puritan society.

The connection that Sargeson makes between illness and repression is no less explicit but he takes rather longer than Henderson to make the connection. Henry Griffiths is brought up to believe that sexuality is evil. Women represent all that is equally desirable and wicked. One of Henry's first memories is of the amazing ability of his mother to undress and dress inside her nightgown:

> all of mother inside her nightgown, all except her head, the sleeves hanging empty, and bit by bit mother's clothes went inside the nightgown, until she took it off and she was standing there with all her clothes on. [5]

The idea that, because of their sexuality which is hidden under their clothes, women are mysterious beings that men sinfully covet is reinforced by Henry's brother Arnold's encouragement to Henry to spy on their Aunt Clara in the bath. When they are discovered they are beaten.[6]

The diseased state of Henry's mind with regard to his own sexual feelings becomes most apparent in his thoughts about Molly, the girl who works in the lawyer's office with him. In this section of the novel Sargeson begins using the device of italicising the passages of Henry's conscience. These passages indicate the distance between what Henry wants to do and what he feels he should do because of what he has been taught. When it is time for Molly to leave the office, Henry devises various ploys to delay her and keep her with

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[5]Frank Sargeson, I Saw in my Dream (John Lehmann, London, 1949), page 11.
[6]Ibid., page 23.

him. Finally she gets on her bicycle and Henry watches her ride away.

> [He] could only stand and watch while she got on and rode away, perhaps turning into the wind if there was a wind, and having to ride one hand, so that she could hold on to her skirt with the other -

But the mention of her skirt is dangerous because it covers parts of her body Henry should not think about, and Henry's account of the end of the day is broken by one word from his conscience: *"no"*.[7]

So strong is Henry's guilt at his feelings for Molly that he locks her in the strong room in the office.[8] This reaction is presented as another facet of the puritan conscience - whatever is unpleasant is hidden. Inevitably Henry's attempt to solve his guilt about Molly creates more problems for him, rather than fewer. So great is his guilt that he becomes ill, and it is this illness which makes the connection between repression and disease apparent. Henry's mother, who has been one of the prime factors in his conditioning about sex, treats his illness as a physical one. That the illness is really a symbol of his diseased mental state is indicated by a recurrent dream he has:

> It was an awfully long dream, and it always sort of made him feel tired out. Yet there was nothing in it, because all he ever did was try to walk through miles and miles of dry sand carrying a heavy sort of swag on his back. And the swag weighed him down so much that he could hardly get his legs to move. And it seemed to go on for hours and hours, with him being dragged down by the weight of the swag, and every minute feeling he'd have to drop, yet somehow managing to keep his legs moving. [9]

The journey through sand is a symbol of Henry's journey through life in a society which places the burden of guilt on

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[7]Ibid., page 49.
[8]Ibid., page 59.
[9]Ibid., page 86.

all who live in it. The physical illness enables Henry to work through his guilt, and to expunge it. This becomes clear at the beginning of Chapter 12, which opens "Naked on the grass ...",[10] an indication that Henry feels happy about his own body in a way that he has not felt at any other stage in the novel. Henry then proceeds to erase all the influences his mother, father and Aunt Clara have had over him. He does this by remembering an incident in which their hypocrisy about the values they adhered to was evident. He remembers Aunt Clara, for example, taking him to see the tattooed lady at the show. In order to show the tattoos, the lady has to be almost naked. Aunt Clara *"said it was disgusting and wouldn't look"*. She drags Henry away, but not before Henry has had revealed to him the pleasure that adults get from looking at a semi-naked female.[11]

Henry now feels pity for the limited outlook of his parents and his aunt, and anger at their hypocrisy. He is free from the burdens of their puritan influence, but he is also empty of any set of values: "I don't know a thing, he said".[12] Part Two of the novel recounts his attempts to acquire a set of values that he might believe in.

Emphasis on hard work is another facet of the puritan conscience that Henderson and Sargeson question. Osgar sees the pattern of his life as being "to boarding school, to university, to work, to wed ..."[13] He conforms to this pattern, attending the disease-ridden Nelson Boys' College, and going from there to study law at university. He sees it as a place which gives to those that already have - "unto every one that hath shall be given" - and yet those who

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[10]Ibid., page 87.
[11]Ibid., page 88.
[12]Ibid., page 90.
[13]Henderson, op.cit., page 37.

receive do not wish for the rewards of university education.[14] He moves into a job in a government department, and spends his time there "safe again in dike no. 9 ... safe from all the worthiest of the Old Boys flying IQ's, degrees and security clearances from their family trees ..."[15] Osgar leaves the safety of this life to work on a cattle ship going to Korea. His job is to clean out the cattle's stalls. In leaving New Zealand in this way Osgar is not only leaving the security of a job, he is also neglecting his responsibilities to Angela, the woman he is expected to marry. Osgar is prepared to love Angie, but not to take on all the roles and expectations society has of him as a man in love with a woman. Of love he says:

> Shun sarcasm. Love. Love all that is love. ... Love, Angie, love, love, love, for love is potent. Ah Christ, Angie, keep love with you, my angel Angie of the void, for ever. [16]

Of marriage, which is what society expects of a man and woman in love, he is rather less euphoric. The emptiness of that state becomes distressingly obvious to Osgar as he watches the marriage of his brother Bevan:

> In the end Bevan had married for the same reason Thrumbull went to Korea: because he wasn't strong enough not to, because he'd been nurtured for nothing else. For the revolution of love, the mob erects the guillotine of marriage.

This opinion is reinforced by a dream Osgar has on the night of Bevan's marriage. It is of

> a man and a woman in a house. The woman directed the man to take up the linoleum and the floorboards and dig in the soil beneath. The man dug in the bituminous, dank soil under the house, and to his unutterable horror he discovered the soil to be no more than a few inches thick. There was nothing underneath, nothing but a pitch black pit of nothingness. The woman comforted the man *Benedicte, Benedick,* and encouraged him to lay the

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[14] Ibid., page 26.
[15] Ibid., page 27.
[16] Ibid., page 72.

> topsoil over the abyss ... The man was Bevan and the woman was Hilda and they lived together N & N in the ark of Matrimony. [17]

It is not surprising that Osgar believes he is doing Angie a favour by leaving her.

Osgar's parents believe otherwise, both about his abandoning of Angie and about his leaving his job. What their expectations of him were become apparent from a letter they write him when he is on the way to Korea. In this letter the emphasis on hard work as a means of achieving anything worthwhile is made apparent. A wife is seen as an acquisition that should be cared for like any other acquisition. *"It's not fair on Angela, she is a fine girl who deserves proper security. She would give you regular meals etc and you would be a settled man. Look at Bevan - it's been the making of that boy."* We have already looked at Bevan and seen the emptiness of his situation. What Osgar's parents want him to be made into is a settled, conforming member of society. He should realise *"that only work gets you anywhere"*. He should stop fooling *"around with your poems and the piano"*.[18] This belief that artistic activity is a waste of time and energy is part of the puritan conscience that Sargeson also abhors. As a child Henry makes friends with two other boys who are always kept in because they make no adequate contribution to the classroom. "George wasn't much good at anything except sums, and Henry wasn't much good at anything except drawing, and Charlie was no good at anything at all".[19] These three boys are considered unacceptable because their talents appear to be limited to one area.

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[17]Ibid., page 83.
[18]Ibid., page 135.
[19]Sargeson, op.cit., page 19.

At the end of Osgar's parents' letter to him he is told *"It is high time you pulled yourself together and acted like a man"*.[20] What acting like a man entails has already been indicated in the letter - working hard, marrying a good woman, not drinking to excess, not indulging in artistic activities, and owning things. The implication of the letter also is that Osgar should be grateful for what his parents have done for him, and out of duty should conform to their expectations of him.

Henry has the same expectations placed upon him. His Uncle Bob is held up to him as an example of what he should not do. Unlike another uncle, Ted, Bob has not been "sensible and settled down and become a respectable married man while he was still quite young".[21] When Uncle Bob comes to visit he persuades Henry into a game of tennis which leads Henry to neglect his duty of turning on the stove to cook the Sunday lunch. When Henry's parents return from church they find Henry enjoying himself at the expense of his duty to the family. His father is angry because Henry has his shirt off, and his mother is "white and angry" because he has not made the meal.[22]

Henry's illness is caused mostly by the conflict he faces because of his sexual desires towards Molly. To a lesser extent he is also confused by his role as a working person. He works in an office as a law clerk, but neither he nor Molly does much work because the owner of the office is always away drinking.[23] Henry is upset by the hypocrisy of the adult world which this behaviour reveals. When he is ill, he is tempted to get up and play tennis, but does

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[20]Henderson, loc.cit.
[21]Sargeson, op.cit., page 37.
[22]Ibid., page 43.
[23]Ibid., page 48.

not yet know how he can be well enough for pleasurable activities but not for going to work.[24] Henry has to some extent resolved this conflict at the end of Part One, because the doctor has told him to get sun on his body but not to exert himself. There is now an outside authority telling him that it is permissible to swim and sunbathe, but not to work in an orthodox way.[25]

Osgar Senney and Henry Griffiths make journeys into their inner worlds and bring back reports on the diseased state of their imaginative and emotional world. In the process of reporting on their journey and the contents of their inner worlds they destroy the beliefs and values that have contributed to the state of the inner world. The inner world (because of the ways they have been conditioned) is not worth preserving. The inner world of Frame's characters is often terrifying but there is little temptation for her characters to abandon their allegiance to it. Henry and Osgar must give up the contents of their inner worlds and create something more positive. They do not turn to an inner world of fantasy and emotion as offering them a viable alternative to the puritan world they have rejected. Instead they choose a very familar New Zealand escape route - the world of nature.

Osgar's identification with the natural world is through the cattle on the boat going to Korea. This affinity also marks a return to his childhood before he went to Nelson Boys' College. Like so many New Zealand writers Henderson portrays that childhood as a time of innocence. As Osgar feeds the cattle on the boat to Korea he remembers

[24]Ibid., page 85.
[25]Ibid., page 88.

his contacts with nature when he was a child, and the memory is a good one, rendered in terms that are similar to those used by Dylan Thomas in his poems about childhood:

> There, alone in the hills, before you ever saw a moving picture or a city or how people lived one wall from other people, before your mother died, before her watercolours were taken from the wall, before your father became a butcher on the flat, before you were sent to boarding school, to university, to work, to wed, before everything mysterious and miraculous was lulled by logic and lies and leashed and led away and lashed by laws and lectures, there in the hills on the farm where you grew and dreamed before you heard the language of leaders and legitimation, before you considered the limits first and before everything was located, and lost ... [26]

It is surprising that Henderson does not add that all this happened before the Fall, because that is the natural implication of such a description.

Although he is alienated from his parents and Angie, Osgar is no more part of the society in which he lives on the boat going to Korea. The men suspect him of being a spy because they assume that a person with a law degree would not choose to work on a cattle ship. Osgar leaves the men after they have accused him of being "a bloody spy"[27] to work with the cow Goldie and her calf. "When the mucking out, the hosing down, the feeding and watering and drenching was done, Senney sat with Goldie and her calf".[28] There is more affinity between Osgar and these two animals than there has been between Osgar and any human being. This is all that Henderson can offer as a positive alternative to the repressed and diseased nature of the person that Osgar is expected to be.

Sargeson's alternative is as vague as Henderson's. Henry Griffiths becomes Dave Spencer, and goes to work on a

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[26]Henderson, op.cit., page 37.
[27]Ibid., page 109.
[28]Ibid., page 111.

farm. He tries to answer the question that recurs through Part Two of I Saw in my Dream: *"why am I oh why am I here in the cold and the dark? Cold bed rolling over to the sun, cold embryo waiting to be born. Why am I waiamihea?"*[29] Dave believes that he is going to find some alternative mode of existence on the farm, which will fill the vacuum left by his rejection of puritan beliefs and values. How unlikely this is becomes clear from the story of Cedric, the son of the farmer for whom Dave works. The farmer built a cave in the hills to lock Cedric into because Cedric refused to work, consorted with happy-go-lucky Maoris, and became interested in women. The futility of Dave's search becomes apparent to him at the end of the novel when he, the farmer, and Dave's workmate, Johnny, drive sheep to town and then go to a fair. Dave is about to make a date with a waitress he meets in the tea room at the fair. Just as he is about to find out her name

> he was startled by the sudden grip of a hand
> on his shoulder -
> *oh NO*
> - And looking up into the boss's face, confused,
> he nevertheless noted that for once it didn't
> have a smile. [30]

The interjection from Dave's conscience reminds the reader that the puritan is still at large in the person of Dave's boss. He wants Dave to go home and burn off before it rains. Again hard work has triumphed over pleasure. Dave recognises the limitations of this way of life. He is assisted in his escape from the puritan conscience by a landslide which buries the farmhouse, the farmer and his wife in it. Dave is free to return home.

At home nothing has changed. Dave's mother still

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[29]Sargeson, op.cit., page 93.
[30]Ibid., page 261.

wants him to work hard and earn enough money. Only her suggestion that he visit his brother and his new child presents Dave with some kind of alternative. The sight of the baby awakens in Dave some idea of what the future might hold:

> And for a moment or two Dave stood still and watched.
> Yes.
> He wanted to do something too. In his own way. Something special -
> *yes*
> YES.[31]

This rather vague "affirmation of life"[32] which ends the novel is the only alternative that Sargeson offers for Dave.

Both Henderson and Sargeson are very good at rejecting a world in which their protagonists have no part, but they do little to create a new world or suggest an alternative vision of the world to the one that they so successfully demolish. Demolition very often precedes creation. There can be a kind of beauty and pleasure in demolition, as these two novels show, but we need something more positive as an alternative than the vague affirmation of life - whatever that is - that ends I Saw in my Dream or the affinity with a cow which pervades The Log of a Superfluous Son.

DICK SEDDON'S GREAT DIVE AND THE SLIPWAY

The inability of Sargeson and Henderson to offer more than a vague alternative to the set of values and behaviour that they reject in their novels illustrates the extent of the burden under which men writers labour in New Zealand fiction. There is so much for the male novelist to reject

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[31] Ibid., page 277.
[32] Winston Rhodes, Introduction to I Saw in my Dream (1949; rpt. Auckland University Press/Oxford University Press, Auckland, 1974), page xv.

that all his effort and energy can be taken up in that process rather than in the process of creation.

Like Osgar Senney and Henry Griffiths, the protagonists of Wedde's and Billing's novels are alienated from a world which considers their modes of behaviour and thought to be unacceptable. Chink and Geoffrey Targett isolate themselves from acceptable society by artificial means - by their reliance on alcohol and drugs. In the case of Geoffrey Targett in The Slipway, alcoholism creates his sense of separation from the world in which he lives. For Chink in Dick Seddon's Great Dive, drugs and alcohol are only the outward manifestations of a sense of separation he has felt since he was a child. At school his name, Chink, was "by far the strangest and funniest in the school". But it only serves to emphasise Chink's separation from those around him, "Because from the very start, possibly even before this first day at school for all Kate knew, he became used to feeling separate".[33]

Both Billing and Wedde are describing men alienated from the society in which they live, either by choice as in Chink's case, or by failure to conform as in Geoffrey's case. We see Geoffrey Targett's inner world, a world created out of his rejection by the outer world. We do not see Chink's inner world, because his story is told by his lover, Kate, and, as the reader is told at the end of the novel, "This is how *she* sees it".[34] How Chink sees it we will presumably never know because he is drowned in the Tasman Sea. The similarities between Chink and Geoffrey lie in their inability to conform to certain expectations made of them as

[33] Ian Wedde, Dick Seddon's Great Dive (Islands, Vol.5, No.2, November 1976, Auckland), page 125.
[34] Ibid., page 212.

men, and the means by which they express the sense of rejection that follows. Once again the process of rejection is more important than is the creation of another vision of the world. The inner world of emotion and imagination which is so important to the other outcast groups - women and Maoris - is not considered here as viable for men. It is possible that if these men did really "trade ... [their] safety for the glass beads of fantasy"[35] they would be admitting the extent to which they are alienated from the world in which they live. That they are not prepared to make that final admission is an indication of how strong their conditioning into certain roles and expectations is, and how difficult it is to reject that conditioning and to construct out of the rejection some alternative modes of behaviour and thought.

The subjective nature of Geoffrey Targett's world is indicated by Billing's use of conditional verbs whenever Geoffrey is in a world of his own creating. The main event of The Slipway is the sinking of the boat the Saint Clair, the last boat left at the once-famous ship yards that have belonged to the Targett family. Under Geoffrey's inept administration the ship yards have reached their nadir and the sinking of the Saint Clair signals the death knell to a once-prosperous family business. The novel covers a period of two days: Wednesday, the day before the sinking of the boat, and Thursday, when the boat is sunk by the air force, who use it for target practice. Part of the novel is taken up with the physical events which occur on both days, but juxtaposed to them is Geoffrey's account of what might happen on these two days. The distinction between the two visions

[35] Janet Frame, Faces in the Water (George Braziller, New York, 1961), page 11.

of the world is indicated by Billing's use of certain verbs.

On Wednesday, Geoffrey decides to go fishing, in order that he can forget the enormity of what is to happen the following day. He buys some very expensive fishing equipment, knowing that in doing so he is spending money he does not have. He uses as his reason the assumption that he and his son Jonathon will make many fishing trips together.

> He would teach the lad how to fish. They could go to Outram at the weekends and he could buy cold lager at the Shingle Creek Hotel ... Jonathon would meet all sorts of people there ... That would in turn be good for Geoffrey. He would not be able to drink spirits without setting a bad example ... [36]

None of these things will happen, and it is the final sentence quoted here that puts the lie to all that Geoffrey has imagined will occur. The novel is a painful record of a man constantly intending to give up drinking and then taking one last drink as a salute to that intention. Every verb in the passage quoted above is preceded by a conditional auxiliary - "would", "could" - indicating the distance between Geoffrey's intentions and what will actually occur.

When Geoffrey returns home from this fishing trip, which has consisted more of drinking than fishing, he is drunk. He is also guilty about the amount of money he has spent and about taking the car without letting his wife, Rose, know where it had gone. He must devise a way of going into the house so that his drunkenness goes unnoticed, and he is not accused of those things he knows he is guilty of. Geoffrey spends eight pages speculating on the various ways in which he can enter the house: "He could stand in there, among the fuchsias, close to where the flagpole once stood, and eat fuchsia berries and watch the fire in the

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[36] Graham Billing, The Slipway (Quartet Books, London, 1974), page 51.

high living-room".[37] "In another five minutes, with the smell of the green fern in the cooling air, he might very well feel a lot less drunk".[38] Alternatively, when his daughter, Imogen, is sent out to buy a coconut from an itinerant salesman, Geoffrey speculates that "He should have stepped out onto the path and been striding purposefully up it so that he met Imogen half-way". Having missed that opportunity he thinks he could "wait for her and then step out onto the path behind her and stride along towards the house like a clipper ship in tow to a steam tug".[39] The reader discovers in the following chapter that Geoffrey has done none of the things he planned to do. "Targett emerged from the fernery and began to walk with not very light steps towards the kitchen door."[40] The phrase "not very light steps" indicates that the main part of Geoffrey's imagined strategy - sobering himself up - has not occurred at all. The rest of the plan has likewise been abandoned. Geoffrey knows, as the reader also knows, that he cannot avoid his family's knowing he is drunk, because they now expect him to be constantly in that state or near to it. The use of conditional verbs indicates the distance between Geoffrey's actual behaviour and what he knows is expected of him but which he cannot conform to.

Geoffrey is removed from acceptable society because of his alcoholism. He does not wish to remain in a world of his own creating, and it is the nature of this world that makes him want to return to reality. Geoffrey's inner world is not pleasant, and in his estimation not worth clinging to. Geoffrey wishes above all to return to being an acceptable

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[37]Ibid., page 86.
[38]Ibid., page 90.
[39]Ibid., page 93.
[40]Ibid., page 94.

man - a father, husband and lover, and successful business man. He will not be able to do this because he is, as his name suggests, as much the target of external forces as his ship is. He is too far removed from the world he covets to return to it; by remaining in the imaginary world created by his reliance on alcohol he alienates himself further from the world in which he wishes to live. He is, as he realises at the end of the novel, in a "lonely nightmare".[41] Unlike Sargeson and Henderson who offer vague affirmations of life to their protagonists, Billing offers no alternatives for Geoffrey. Because it offers no alternative for its male protagonist, The Slipway is the most poignant of all these accounts of suffering caused to men who are outcasts from a world of their own making.

Chink, the protagonist of Ian Wedde's novel Dick Seddon's Great Dive, separates himself by choice from the world in which he lives, and increases his alienation by behaviour he knows will be considered unacceptable. Yet his status as an outsider is not certain. Kate, his lover and the narrator of his story, sees him as "strung out like one of the strings of his neglected instruments". He is obsessed by a "line in his life which runs from south to north, from north to south ..."[42] His urge to travel the length of New Zealand is a symbol of an emotional desire to find out who he is. Kate has no idea of Chink's identity, and she presents what she knows as an incomplete picture. Certain clues are given to her, and one of the most potent is a statement made by their homosexual friend Beck. Of this statement Kate reflects "Old Beck had a hunch ..."[43]

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[41]Ibid., page 191.
[42]Wedde, op.cit., page 120.
[43]Ibid., page 202.

Beck's statement is an analysis of the conflict facing all men. He tells Chink:

> your trouble is Darwinian paranoia, a paranoia of biological necessity, a paranoia of practical genetics: the idea is that one cock can get around numerous women for purposes of procreation and so most men are, practically speaking, in terms of the survival of our species, redundant, unless we regard them as drones, suicide-soldiers, slaves. It's the women we can't cut down on, right Kate? ... huh ... all right, but this is the origin of what Kate calls 'male chauvinism' though I bet she's never thought about it. First: deep down most men know they're irrelevant unless they can prove themselves to be good studs and all that. Second: so they come on *machismo* but it's a sad sham and it destroys them as people. Third: they struggle to retain the power they know they don't deserve, they use this power in sexist programmes, phew, listen to *me*, they emphasise the symbols of maleness rather than its functions, since function and symbol are usually contradictory. Result: like, here's Chink with cock written all over him, yards of it, but he's got no children and all his other vital energies are directed inwards, not outwards into the species to educate it or reproduce it or protect it. Analysis: he's really a human dildoe, a eunuch with a strap-on, he's impotent, he's a self-fucker ... Listen, all supercocks are really at an infantile stage of development. [44]

Beck suggests that Chink become a homosexual. Chink will not take either the analysis or the suggestion seriously. The analysis is tediously long in a manner that is typical of Wedde in this novel, but the predicament of all men that Beck outlines is as near to being an accurate analysis of Chink as any that is presented in the novel. Chink's allegiance to accepted masculine behaviour is shown by his making love to women. In other respects, however, Chink has always refused to behave in an acceptable way. Why, asks Beck, does he persist in this one aspect of masculine behaviour when it is just as futile as any other? Maybe this is the conflict which divides Chink in half; we cannot know because the narrator does not know, but it is the

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[44] Ibid., page 201.

nearest we get to knowing what it is that causes Chink's suicide. Like Billing, Wedde offers nothing to his protagonist caught in a masculine world where he sees himself as having no part. Kate never knows Chink's inner world, but certainly Chink himself found no solace in a world of emotion and imagination. Geoffrey and Chink are alienated from the world they live in in a way that Maoris and women never are. These two groups at least can turn to an inner world. By their sex and their race they are already considered insignificant, so that however they behave or feel or think they will not be able to change that judgement. Because of their sex, men behave, think and feel in ways that are considered acceptable and significant. When they do not do this, their isolation from the society in which they live is immense, and the possibility of their making journeys into some other world is small.

THE NOVELS OF RONALD HUGH MORRIESON

In the novels of Ronald Hugh Morrieson we have the best example of the dilemma which faces the male novelists whose work is discussed in this section of the thesis. For Henry Griffith and Osgar Senney, Geoffrey Targett and Chink the real world offers them nothing which they can consider valuable. The world in which they should have a dominant part because of their masculinity is alien to them. Yet none of them is able to do as the women discussed in Part I could do, and turn inwards to a new and rich world of the imagination.

Morrieson's novels are the product of a man whose natural allegiance was to what Janet Frame has termed "that

world" but who because he was a man was conditioned into believing that his natural loyalty was to "this world".[45] His novels are evidence of the unresolved conflict which such divided allegiances produced.

The most obvious example of the meeting of Morrieson's imaginative world and the real world occurs in the character of Salter in his first novel, The Scarecrow. Salter is a product of an imaginative world, a character who has his existence in the world of fantasy. Morrieson, however, is obliged to place Salter in the real world of Klynham because it is to that world that he feels the strongest allegiance.

The descriptions of Salter which occur in The Scarecrow are evidence of his place in the world of the imagination rather than in the real world. When he is first seen by Lynette on the train she observes that "he might belong to the walking dead". She uses the word "zombie" about him,[46] not in the colloquial sense of Salter's being stupid, which he is not, but in the literal sense of his being a "corpse said to be revived by witchcraft".[47] This initial description of him establishes him as a creature who is not of "this" world.

His physical characteristics heighten the impression that Salter belongs to some other sphere. Lynette observes that he is as "tall as a lamp post and carried about the same amount of fat".[48] He has "claw-like" hands, a "scrawny" neck, is "toothless", and has a nose which is "enormous, like a beak. It was a nose roughly pitted all

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[45] Janet Frame, "Beginnings" in Landfall, Vol.19, No.1, March 1965, page 45.
[46] Ronald Hugh Morrieson, The Scarecrow (1963; rpt. Heinemann, Auckland, 1976), page 24.
[47] The Concise Oxford Dictionary (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1976).
[48] Morrieson, op.cit., page 23.

over and blue in colour".[49] Salter is a character whose physical appearance resembles that of the villains of most comics. This is an indication of the extent to which he is a character whose existence is primarily in a fantasy world, but whom Morrieson feels compelled to bring into contact with the real world.

Salter's activities in the novel bear the marks also of his belonging to the world of the imagination rather than to the real world. He introduces himself to Klynham by performing magical tricks in the pub, aided, he tells the assembled men there, by "the gods of darkness and magic".[50] The idea that he has allegiance to the forces of fantasy is reinforced by Neddy's first encounter with him. Salter comes to the Poindexter house and is immediately attracted to Neddy's nubile sister, Prudence. He does tricks with a knife, and then as Neddy watches in hatred and fear Salter weaves an "evil spell"[51] about himself and Prudence. When Prudence and Neddy attempt to laugh the incident off as being the stuff of comic books which everyone knows is not real, Salter turns in anger against them and Neddy realises that "His blood was black!"[52]

The events predicted by Salter's tricks with the knife are realised later in the novel when he murders Prudence's friend Angela, and attempts to rape and murder Prudence. The violence of the novel is a result of Morrieson's bringing together the world of fantasy and the world of reality. Violence occurs in many of Frame's novels to the same extent and for the same reason, but in rather

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[49] Ibid., page 24.
[50] Ibid., page 37.
[51] Ibid., page 97.
[52] Ibid., page 98.

different ways.[53] While the violence of Frame's novels is controlled by her for her own fictional purposes - usually to convince the reader of the inauthentic nature of "this" world - the violence of Morrieson's novels occurs for reasons that he is not aware of. His control over the material, and his reasons for combining the world of the imagination with the world of reality, are unconscious in a way that Frame's are not. There is no evidence in The Scarecrow that Morrieson was aware of what Salter represented. Morrieson is in control of the narrative but his use of symbol and the issues which his novel raises occur spontaneously rather than being planned. The unconscious nature of much of what Morrieson did in this first novel becomes more apparent in the novels which followed it: Came a Hot Friday, Predicament and Pallet on the Floor.

In these three novels the world of the imagination is diminished in favour of the real world, yet the violence which the meeting of the two worlds occasioned in The Scarecrow still occurs. Those characters who resemble Salter in both appearance and function are closer to the real world than he is, and thus the violence they instigate is more immediate than the violence perpetrated by Salter. The Spook in Predicament is the same sort of other-worldly figure for Cedric Williamson that Salter was for Neddy Poindexter. When Cedric first meets the Spook he sees him as a person whose face "was to dog him through a thousand nightmares". Like Salter, the Spook is physically repulsive and what makes him repulsive are the same kinds of features

[53] See, for example, the incarceration of Daphne Withers and Istina Mavet in mental institutions; and the treatment of Geoffrey Rainbird by the community in which he lives.

that distinguish the villains of comics:

> The Spook had one hand, the fingers bright copper with tobacco stain and a cigarette protruding between two of them, cupped across the lower half of his flour-white face like a mask. Smoke drifted up in front of his eyes and curled back over his head as if following the few wisps of hair switched back over the nearly bald pate. With the other hand he held the lapel of his coat across his throat so that from chin to toe there was no colour to be glimpsed but black. [54]

Yet the Spook's activities never reach the violence and fantastic nature that Salter's have. He becomes involved in Cedric's and Mervyn Toebeck's plot to blackmail Ernie Fox and then Blair Bramwell for their illicit love affairs. The Spook and Mervyn are part of an illegal liquor deal, but neither of these activities in any way matches those of Salter in violence. In fact the most violent act of Predicament is done to the Spook rather than by him, when Blair Bramwell decapitates him.[55]

In Came a Hot Friday the character whose violent activities most closely resemble those of Salter is no match for Salter in physical appearance. Selwyn Bishop's appearance, like Salter's, has degenerated through drinking but he is not the kind of revolting figure that Salter is.[56] His activities, however, are of the same kind of violence as Salter's: he has a hotel burnt down so he can claim the insurance and has no qualms of conscience about the old man who died because of the fire; he is not averse to killing three people in his betting hall.[57]

In these two novels, the second and third of Morrieson's fictional production, the collision between fantasy

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[54] Ronald Hugh Morrieson, Predicament (The Dunmore Press, Palmerston North, 1974), page 80.
[55] Ibid., page 188.
[56] Ronald Hugh Morrieson, Came a Hot Friday (Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1964), page 114.
[57] Ibid., Chapter 21, pages 206-212.

and reality which Salter represents in The Scarecrow is averted. Thus the violence of Came a Hot Friday seems gratuitous in a way that the violence of The Scarecrow does not, and the appearance of the Spook in Predicament is a product of some kind of adolescent fantasy fed on comic strips. The vitality which had permeated The Scarecrow has degenerated by the fourth novel, Pallet on the Floor, into mindless violence. In this novel there is no creation from the imagination who stalks the real world of Kurikino. The real world dominates the novel, and while it is a real world which is seldom described in New Zealand fiction - violent, hopeless and bleak, all of it dominated by the slaughter-house image of the meat works - it lacks the vividness of The Scarecrow in particular.[58]

Morrieson's novels are the products of a writer whose allegiance should have been to the world of fantasy and imagination but who was diverted from that world by his conditioning as a man in a society which recognises the outer physical world as the only true world for men to live in. The dilemma that Morrieson faces, and which is faced by all the men whose novels are discussed in this section, leads to the production of a novel like The Scarecrow. Because Morrieson never resolved his own divided allegiances, presumably because he was not aware of the extent to which they were divided, his work degenerated to the stage where the real world in which he was not at home dominates the novels.

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[58] Ronald Hugh Morrieson, Pallet on the Floor (The Dunmore Press, Palmerston North, 1976).

CONCLUSION

In a discussion of two recently published collections of short stories, Lawrence Jones made the following statement about the nature of New Zealand fiction in general:

> In the brief history of New Zealand narrative, realism appears as the only mode, *the* way of seeing, and thus the realistic novel, novella, and short story have been the dominant genres. It would appear that this is still so. Despite the great social changes of the last twenty years, the national sensibility still remains one of liberal rationalism, still adequately expressed by the realistic story. [1]

This statement makes explicit the main assumption that has lain behind any analysis of New Zealand fiction. It is an assumption that permeates such seminal works as E.H. McCormick's Letters and Art in New Zealand, and Robert Chapman's essay "Fiction and the Social Pattern". In the opening chapter of his book, McCormick announces that his chief aim in his evaluation of "New Zealand letters and art" is to "bring out their relation to social changes in the years since European discovery".[2] Thus literature becomes a social document, and realistic fiction is particularly well suited to being used in this way. The title alone of Chapman's essay[3] announces the ways in which fiction will be regarded, and the types of fiction that will be useful to his study. Neither of these two commentators examines their assumption that realistic fiction dominates the literary scene in New Zealand; thus, they make no judgement

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[1] Lawrence Jones, "The Persistence of Realism: Dan Davin, Noel Hilliard and Recent New Zealand Short Stories" in Islands, Vol.6, No.2, December 1977, page 187.

[2] E.H. McCormick, Letters and Art in New Zealand (Department of Internal Affairs, Wellington, 1940), Preface.

[3] Robert Chapman, "Fiction and the Social Pattern" (1953; rpt. Wystan Curnow, ed., Essays on New Zealand Literature, Heinemann, Auckland, 1973), pages 71-98.

on the realistic or any other mode of fiction.

Later critics have been more inclined to use the word "realistic" as a prescriptive rather than as a descriptive word. Jones' comment falls into this category, so that for him realism becomes the only authentic way of fictionalising the New Zealand experience. Similarly, Michael Volkerling, in his Ph.D. thesis, Images of Society in New Zealand Writing, dismisses what he calls the "personal" writing of novelists like Janet Frame and Frank Sargeson as being "exclusive",[4] while he acclaims the writing of Maurice Shadbolt because he (Volkerling) sees it as being closer to the society of which Shadbolt writes.[5] In other words, Volkerling praises Shadbolt because he confirms what the society he lives in believes to be both acceptable and significant, in a way that realistic novelists have always done. Yet what is significant and acceptable to both Shadbolt and Volkerling is as exclusive as either Frame's or Sargeson's vision of the world.

While it is true that much good and valuable writing has come in the realistic tradition of fiction in New Zealand, we should also be aware of J.C. Reid's desperate and depressing comment that "frequently the novel seems to be concerned less with re-creating human experience and expressing a vision of the human condition than with using fiction for marginal sociological comment of a fairly shop-worn kind".[6] The advent of a new and different fictional mode must herald a re-evaluation of the fiction as a whole,

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[4]Michael Volkerling, Images of Society in New Zealand Writing: An Examination of the Social Concerns of New Zealand Writers, 1960-1970, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Auckland, 1975, page 235.

[5]Ibid., page 192.

[6]J.C. Reid, "New Zealand Literature" in The Literatures of Australia and New Zealand by G.A. Wilkes and J.C. Reid, (The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1970), page 205.

so that no longer can the critic claim that realism is "*the* way of seeing", and so that the realistic novel itself can be judged by literary rather than by social standards. A recognition that the subjective novel is as much part of the New Zealand fictional scene as is the realistic novel should lead to a deeper and more perceptive analysis of that fiction.

Because so many critics in New Zealand have been European and male and thus from that part of society whose contribution is recognised as significant, it has perhaps been difficult for them to realise how limited a view of the world so much of New Zealand fiction offers. Winston Rhodes offers the following rationale for the existence of art:

> As New Zealanders we do not know ourselves, except from statistical analyses and historical summaries, until we become enshrined in art; and it is through the novel that we may discover ourselves and each other. [7]

How little we know of ourselves if we accept the realistic novel as the only true way of interpreting the New Zealand experience.

The subjective novel in form and content is not unique to New Zealand. In European fiction it is a development that began immediately before World War 1. The pattern of the development of this mode of fiction in New Zealand is similar to the development of the subjective novel in other post-colonial fictions, such as those of Australia or the South of the United States. In all cases the development has occurred, as Erich Auerbach has noted about the European subjective novel,[8] in a society threatened with chaos and disintegration, as New Zealand was during the Depression.

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[7] H. Winston Rhodes, New Zealand Novels (New Zealand University Press, Wellington, 1969), page 47.
[8] Erich Auerbach, Mimesis (Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1953), page 545.

The subjective novel in New Zealand is distinguished from other similar fictions by the particularly limited nature of the realistic novel which has dominated the literature. It is difficult to think of another literature in which the dominant fictional mode has been the province of such a small group of people as the realistic novel has been in New Zealand. In the realistic novel in New Zealand, groups are considered unacceptable and their visions of the world insignificant because of some external arbitrary definition such as sex, age, race, or intellectual or physical ability. Thus those who choose to use the form of the subjective novel to interpret their vision of the world are likely to see themselves as alienated from the world in which they live because of some distinction over which they have no control. While this is to some extent true of other post-colonial fictions, there appears to be in Australian fiction, for example, those who simply *feel* themselves to be outsiders rather than seeing themselves cast out for reasons which they cannot control.

Added to this is the relative immaturity of New Zealand fiction. By this I do not mean that we know that novels have been written in this country for little over one hundred years, but rather that the novels themselves give a sense of a literature still self-consciously seeking for some kind of national identity. Thus novelists like Janet Frame and Sylvia Ashton-Warner feel obliged to rail against the limitations of the national sensibility which disallows visions such as those conveyed in their novels. For the same reason many of the male novelists spend much of their time destroying an interpretation of the world which they consider to be invalid, and allow themselves little space

for any constructive interpretation. Maori writers too labour under the burden of having to justify their existence, and the existence of their vision of the world.

Yet in the destruction and the self-justification and the criticism of a hostile society lie the seeds of a richer fiction. Already in the novels which have been written in the subjective mode in New Zealand, we have ample evidence of new and diverse ways of seeing and interpreting the world. The development of the mode of fiction described in this thesis is only recent. It is still in the process of growing and finding for itself new areas of concern and new ways of exploring those areas. The subjective novelists accept no one experience as any more valid than any other, and they make no claim that theirs is the only way of interpreting reality. If they shock us by what they reveal of the national sensibility, they are fulfilling the function of all good writers who increase the knowledge of their readers.

In Janet Frame's novel, A State of Siege, Malfred Signal reflects on her own life and the limitations of her own way of "seeing", and she says:

> I have this dream of a vast imaginative force, its wealth drawn from its initial poverty, that quells prejudice, suspicion, that acts as a beam to draw distant countries close, so that each sees, with instinctive vision, the needs of the other.

It is an optimistic claim for the power of the imagination, and yet to ignore the potential of that force is to do so at our own peril. We have to know that "the heart has laws, sometimes conflicting, to be kept. And the mind has laws." And we have to work "out a system in which all the laws could be respected".[9] If we accept that there are many

[9]Janet Frame, A State of Siege (Pegasus, Christchurch, 1967), page 72.

different ways of seeing, and that in the subjective novel we have one of those different ways, we go some way to realising the dream of "a vast imaginative force".

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